

LOUISE WOODWARD SENTENCE

We will not stop fighting, say parents

BY DANIEL MCGRODY

AS SHE watched her daughter led away in shackles last night, Sue Woodward pledged to continue to fight for her freedom and not to leave the United States without her.

The couple were allowed to see their weeping daughter in a private room in the court building immediately after sentencing was passed.

They clung to each other, as both Gary and Sue Woodward assured their teenage daughter that they would continue the campaign.

As they fought back their own tears, they tried to explain to a distraught Louise that the judge had offered a ray of hope that he could change the murder verdict and her life sentence when she is brought back to court next week.

Court staff said they kissed their daughter on both cheeks as armed guards fastened the manacles to her hands and ankles. Mrs Woodward said: "We told her we love her and we believe in her. And I won't stop fighting for her while I have got a breath in my body. She's an innocent child. They have made a horrendous mistake, and they need to put it right."

Last night the Woodward family showed their anger for the first time. Mrs Woodward said: "Louise believed that, if she told the truth, justice would be done."

"We put our faith in the jury, that they would be able to understand the evidence and see Louise's innocence. I

WOODWARD FAMILY

mean, we don't understand that after two and a half days of obviously going through the evidence very carefully, the jury have come to this ridiculous decision. It's just unbelievable."

The Woodward family were indignant that the judge had ordered then to show no emotion as the verdict was announced.

Nor could they comfort their daughter when she collapsed in torment just ten feet in front of them.

Mrs Woodward said: "That was very hard. I just wanted to run over to her, to comfort her, but what could I say?"

Mr Woodward said: "There's no comfort, no words. I couldn't think what to say. I've just got no, no feeling at all. Just completely numb."

They praised their daughter's legal team and expressed their condolences to the Eappen family, calling Matthew's death "a tragedy".

Mrs Woodward also condemned the televising of the trial which she described as "ridiculous" and said the case had been treated as a "piece of entertainment".

Throughout the trial Mr and Mrs Woodward had been convinced the Boston jury would acquit their daughter of murder, but now they live with the dread it could be 15 years before she is free.

After Woodward was charged in February this year

her mother, 41, gave up her job as a project officer at a college of further education in Birkenhead and moved to Boston to be close to her daughter.

Three times a week Mrs Woodward made the two-hour round trip to Framingham jail to take her daughter books, clothes and her favourite vegetarian dishes.

The rest of the time Mrs Woodward worked as a volunteer in the offices of the defence team while her husband, who is a builder, stayed at home in Elton, Cheshire, with their other daughter, Vicky.

The immediate problem for the family is how to fund an appeal and, if Woodward is made to serve 15 years before parole, how they can pay for her mother to stay in Boston so that she can continue her regular prison trips.

The Woodward family have conceded they are not wealthy and could not meet the court's \$60,000 bail demand when their daughter was charged last February.

Yesterday, as they sat hand in hand in the front row of the public gallery, both remained impassive as Deborah and Sunil Eappen delivered their highly emotional and often damning remarks about their daughter.

Shortly before the jury returned its verdict Mrs Woodward had recalled how she was reluctant to allow her daughter to spend her gap year before going to university working as an au pair in America.

It was not that she doubted



Gary and Susan Woodward leaving court after the sentencing yesterday. "They have made a horrendous mistake," Mrs Woodward said

her daughter's ability to care for children, but more that she would miss her company. "I didn't want her to go. I was being selfish but you can't hold on to them for ever. I was married at her age and I didn't want people making decisions for me."

As one of 13 grandchildren, Woodward had ample experience of caring for younger children. Neighbours in Elton had no qualms about leaving their children with the soft-spoken, considerate teenager who was nicknamed "Loopy Lou".

"Louise is caring and loving, she could not hurt a child. She has the nicest nature of all the family," Mrs Woodward insisted.

Her teachers remember Louise as a considerate, gentle teenager. At Elton Junior School her headteacher,

David Hudson, said: "She was the type of pupil that set the tone for the remainder of the class, never presented a discipline problem and certainly was not prone to outbursts of temper or aggression."

At Helston High School, where Louise gained four A-

levels and is remembered as a gifted musician, her headmistress, Elizabeth Lord, said: "The Louise we knew was a quiet, caring pupil from a stable supportive family background, who worked hard in school and was never in any trouble."

'I hope she can face what she has done and gain forgiveness'

EAPPEN FAMILY

BY JOANNA BAILE

THE parents of Matthew Eappen made an emotional witness-impact statement in court before sentence was passed, to explain the effect of his death. Deborah Eappen said: "Matthew was a beautiful baby with black silky hair and rich chocolate eyes. He was a real butterball. He was so content. He made his needs known and when they were met he was happy again."

"We loved this little bundle of joy, our chamber-munchkin, and we thought that life looked good, that things had fallen into place after medical school and residency, and after getting settled in our new jobs."

"All our hopes and dreams were torn apart. We couldn't believe it. It was beyond our comprehension that our Matty was dying because someone we trusted had hurt him."

"Matty died in our arms, surrounded by family, including his loving 21-year-old brother, Brendan. Despite the tubes and IVs and surgical dressing covering his head, he looked to me like a little prince. Since that day, our lives have completely altered. Our hearts are heavy



Sunil and Deborah Eappen. The mother said: "Our hearts are heavy every day"

every day with the most excruciating pain."

Referring to Woodward, she said: "She didn't look sorry to me. She didn't seem like a child abuser or a monster or murderer. We had no idea she would harm our kid."

"I can't end without speaking for Brendan. He was so upset by someone he cared for. He had so many questions. 'How can baby Matthew die? What is death? He

would look up to the stars to say goodnight to Matty. 'I love you. How was it up in Heaven today?'

"He cried and I had no answers. And his questions will haunt me forever. 'How? What exactly happened? How long did Matty suffer? Why?'

A sobbing Sunil Eappen added: "My life, my family's life, my friends' lives, have all been dramatically changed as a result of her actions, and

we will forever view our world and the people in it with darker glasses on."

"I feel that the jury's decision is just, and the state's mandated punishment is deserved and, despite my hatred for the actions of Louise and my current disdain for her, I really, truly hope that she can face up to what she has done, gain forgiveness and I truly hope that she may some day find the peace of God in her life again."

Au pair agency already faces \$100m action over fire death

FROM JAMES BONE
IN NEW YORK

THE Boston au pair agency that recruited Louise Woodward already knows the legal jeopardy that could flow from the death of the baby in her care.

E.F. Au Pair is currently being sued for \$100 million by the parents of another infant, who was allegedly set on fire by her Swiss au pair in 1991.

Bill and Denise Fischer of the New York suburb of Westchester claim that, despite its advertised claims of rigorous screening, the agency did not properly check the credentials of an unqualified au pair it sent them.

Olivia Riner, a 20-year-old Swiss woman, was charged with arson and second-degree murder a month after her arrival when three separate

fires, fuelled by inflammable liquids, engulfed the family home and killed the Fischer's three-month-old daughter.

E.F. Au Pair paid for Miss Riner's expensive defence team, as it did with Woodward's. Miss Riner was acquitted and returned to Switzerland as something of a heroine. She was driven through the streets of her hometown in a fire engine. Only then did it emerge that she was the daughter of a fireman.

Lawyers agree that E.F. Au Pair could face a similar claim for damages from Sunil and Deborah Eappen. The agency has met the estimated \$460,000 bill for Woodward's legal fight, which it said it was paying in the interests of

"truth and justice". "We are shocked and deeply disappointed with the outcome in this case." The agency added that it had yet to make up its mind whether to continue its financial support.

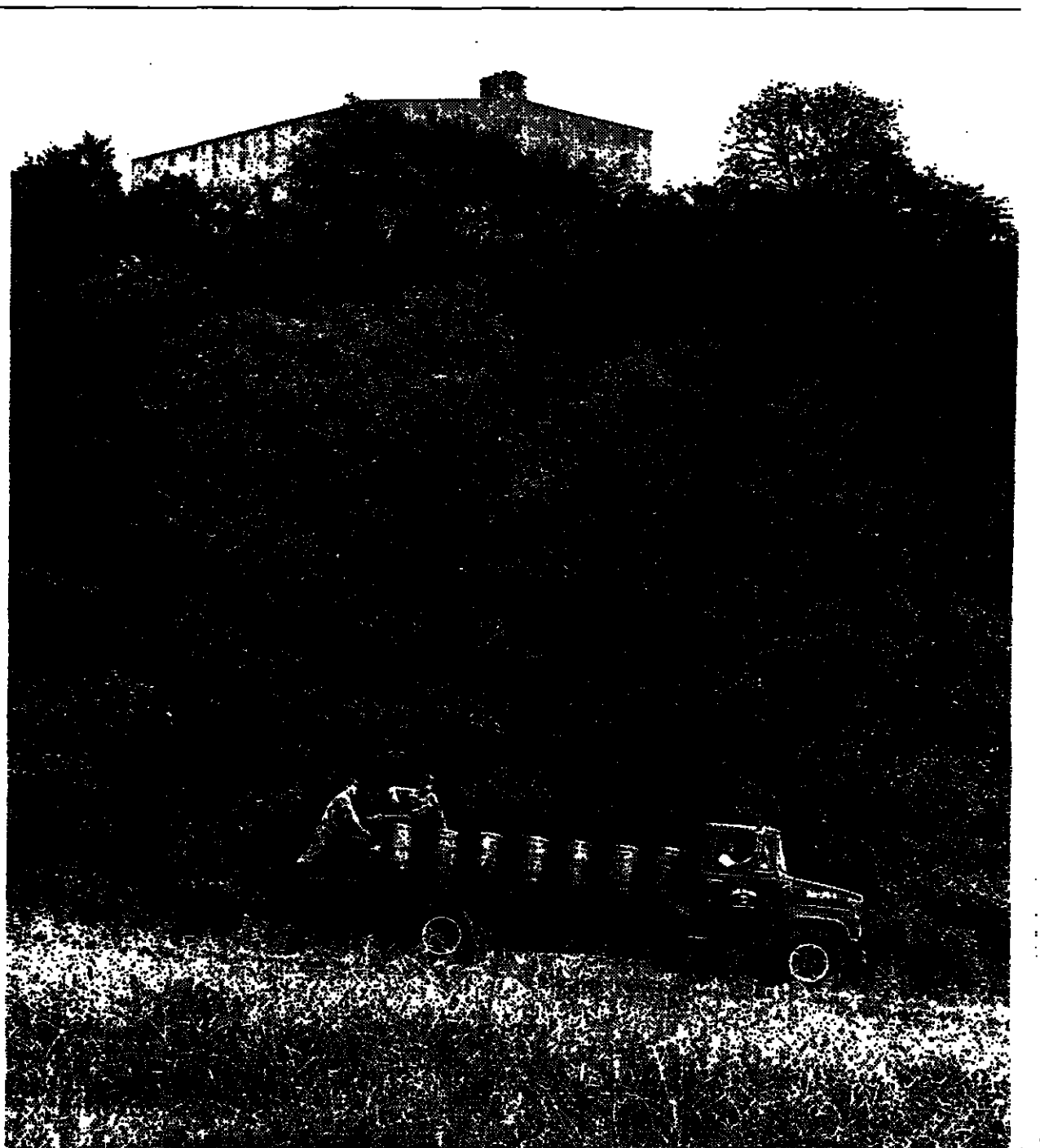
A multimillion-dollar lawsuit stemming from the other recent death involving an au pair in America was settled out of court by the California-based EurAupair agency for a substantial sum.

Anna-Corina Peeze, then 19, returned to The Netherlands after charges that she shook eight-week-old Brenton Scott Devonshire to death at his home outside Washington in 1994 ended in a mistrial. The baby's parents sought \$7.3 million in damages for the agency's alleged negli-

gence in screening au pairs. Ever since Woodward was arrested last February, recruiting agencies say that fewer English teenagers now want to go to America to work as nannies. Nearly 12,000 English-speaking nannies are in the country at any one time.

Au pairs are paid £86 a week. They are given a four-day training course, which includes childcare, when they arrive in the country before joining families.

Claire Longden, 21, from Etwell, near Derby, who is working in Boston, said the training given was inadequate. "It is handled all wrong. You are put on a plane, you arrive in Newark, and you are booked into a hotel for four days and sat in a room for seven hours a day for orientation. It is the last thing you want to do."



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The pilot who set Cherie's course

The farsighted teacher who was a turning point in her early life was a decorated wartime Spitfire flyer, reports Andrew Pierce

THE primary schoolteacher whom Cherie Booth praised this week for changing her life is today revealed to be a decorated wartime Spitfire pilot.

Ms Booth, 43, who is one of the youngest QCs in the country, disclosed that she owed her academic success to a farsighted teacher when she was nine.

The teacher who made such an impact on her life was Denis Smerdon, 73, who has remained a close friend ever since. Before he went into teaching, Mr Smerdon spent hundreds of hours wedged into a Spitfire cockpit over mainland Europe during the Second World War. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his bravery.

He was a popular and respected teacher at St Edmund's Roman Catholic primary school in Waterloo, Liverpool, and lived for many years a few doors from the young Cherie and her family. It was when her studies were affected by the break-up of the marriage of her mother, Gale, and father, Tony — the actor known for his role as the "Scouse git" in *Unti Death us Do Part* — that Mr Smerdon made one of the most critical judgements of her life.

The Prime Minister's wife disclosed why when she accepted an invitation this week to write about the defining moment of her life to mark the 25th anniversary of the Dylex Institute.

She wrote: "I had a fairly uneventful childhood until the age of nine, when my parents split up. This was fairly unusual in those days, particularly in my school, which was a Catholic one. I started not paying attention to my schoolwork."

Mr Smerdon, who taught the fourth form at St Edmund's, persuaded Gale



Cherie Booth, at school in the 1970s, and Norah O'Shaughnessy, who taught her in the first year at St Edmund's primary school, Liverpool, below



Booth, who had gone to work in a fish and chip shop to make ends meet, that Cherie should skip the school third year and move straight into his senior class. She never looked back.

During the last war Mr Smerdon, a flying officer who flew 130 sorties with Belgian airmen attached to the Kent-based 349 Squadron, strafed enemy gun emplacements in mainland Europe and escorted bombers and reconnaissance missions. He was known as Biggles at the school.

After he left the RAF in 1948 he moved into teaching and remained at St Edmund's until he retired 15 years ago.

Mr Smerdon, a grandfather, regularly talked to the schoolchildren about his wartime experiences.

He has remained in regular contact with Ms Booth and her mother, who now lives in Oxford. His four children played with Cherie and her sister, Lyndsey.

Downing Street intervened yesterday to ask Mr Smerdon not to discuss the matter further. But his wife, Molly, said: "Denis was a magical teacher. What he did for Cherie was typical. He helped hundreds of children."

"We have remained friends with her ever since. We were friends with her mother and her grandmother. We spoke

to Cherie yesterday. We are very proud of her.

"Our children played with Cherie when they were children. We go back for years. It was very nice what she said about Denis."

"But it is the sort of thing he would have done for anyone's child. He has always loved children. He loved teaching, and music."

Mr Smerdon, a talented singer who was narrowly beaten by Topol for the lead role in *Fiddler on the Roof*, speaks regularly to Ms Booth on the telephone.

One of her other teachers at St Edmund's also recalled with pride her contribution to the school. Norah O'Shaughnessy, 78, who taught her in the first year of primary school, said: "She was one of the brightest pupils we ever had. She excelled at everything except art. She was a lovely little soul."

"Denis Smerdon was a wonderful teacher to all the children. He was a real father figure. He always took a keen interest in the background of the children and would have done anything he could to help. He was always involved with the parents. Everyone knew that Cherie's father was a famous actor. Teachers would have rallied round if something went wrong with the marriage."

"We all take pride in her achievements. It is so nice to think that it was St Edmund's which put her on the road to success."

After St Edmund's, Ms Booth went on to Seaford Grammar School, which is now the Sacred Heart High School. She returned to the school before the election on speech day. She has yet to return to the junior school. Miss O'Shaughnessy said: "We would love to see her again. She is our star pupil."

Ms Booth later studied at the London School of Economics, where she gained a first in law. She was called to the Bar in 1976 and became a QC in 1995 at the age of 40.

Mrs Smerdon said: "We don't want to make any fuss. We have kept in touch over



Denis Smerdon in the RAF, before he took up teaching. He won a Croix de Guerre

the years and wish her well."

Mr Smerdon is a member of the Spitfire Society and pays tribute to the plane, which he calls the Queen of Aircraft. Since his retirement he has devoted much of his time to the society and helped to form a northern branch in 1988 with more than a hun-

ded veterans. The society is now a charity which gives bursaries and awards to students in the field of aviation.

Ms Booth's parents were reunited in the summer when she was made an honorary fellow of Liverpool John Moores University. She has remained close to both of

them and told the audience of academics, students and business leaders what made her home city so special: "Liverpool is made famous by its people. Speaking as the daughter of a 'Scouse git', I can say that the people are genuinely kind, generous and open to everyone."

Oxford Blue gets year in jail for sex assault

By JOANNA BAILE

THE legal career of an Oxford University golfing Blue was in ruins yesterday when he was jailed for sexually assaulting a female student.

After an evening of heavy drinking, Richard Weaver, who had hoped to become a solicitor, staggered around students' rooms in Exeter College, Oxford, before climbing into his sleeping victim's bed and groping her breasts. Oxford Crown Court was told.

Peter Digney, for the prosecution, said Weaver visited six rooms, including two others occupied by women, where he stared at their breasts. "The obvious inference was that he was looking for a young lady to have something of a sexual nature with."

When a night porter who saw him staggering around the college tried to eject him, Weaver escaped by climbing on to a parapet. He then made his way to his victim's room, where he got into her bed, indecently assaulted her and wrapped his legs round her as she tried to escape.

Another student, Jonathan Young, asleep in another part of the room, awoke and tackled Weaver. He was marched from the college by the junior dean at 3.30am. Guy Mansfield, the Recorder, jailed him for a year after being told that the victim was still traumatised.

"I am satisfied you are not a persistent sexual offender," he said. "But young women must be protected from drunken behaviour which leads to aggressive sexual demands."

"This is a disaster for you, but it is also a disaster for the victim. Not only is your career ruined and your life in tatters: her life has been damaged."

Weaver, 22, of Bourne End, Buckinghamshire, admitted indecent assault on May 29 and no action was taken on a charge of burglary with intent to rape, which he denied.

Adrian Higgins, for the defence, said Weaver was horrified by his behaviour, adding: "He was expected to be a high flyer and will be destroyed by a prison sentence."

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Shoot-out on Wall Street



"The 1980s was the era of the Big Swinging Dick. In the sophisticated 1990s, it wasn't enough for a Big Dick to swing; he had to shoot, too..."

Frank Partnoy, a former New York trader, reveals the shocking side of high finance in an exclusive extract from his new book *F.I.A.S.C.O.* News Review, The Sunday Times, tomorrow

Charities attack 'hypocrisy' on cold weather payments

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CHARITIES representing the elderly joined opposition parties yesterday in accusing the Government of hypocrisy over its decision not to alter cold weather payments to take into account the wind-chill factor.

They said 11 MPs who were now ministers backed a Commons resolution last year proposing that wind chill should be considered when assessing payments. John Denham, the Social Security Minister, defended the Government's position, claiming that other pensioners would lose out if the payments were changed.

Mr Denham said old people would be better off because of the recent cut in VAT on fuel and the abolition of the gas levy. "This Government is greatly committed to help the concerns of old people and it is clear that nobody is going to be worse off," he said. "Allowing for the effects of wind speed would increase the

complexity and uncertainty of the scheme without ensuring that the payments went to those with the greatest need for additional heating," he told the Today programme.

The Government's decision was taken after a new report into the effect of wind speed on heating needs. The report was commissioned last January after Labour MPs attacked the system under which payments were triggered if temperatures fell, or were predicted to fall.

But Help the Aged yesterday said it was "extremely disappointed" with the Government's announcement. It said: "John Denham's statement that lowering the VAT rate on fuel and the levy on gas would help pensioners is mistaken as the gains will amount to mere pence, the poorest gaining the least." Age Concern said the decision was "a blow and a disappointment" for the elderly. The

MPs who signed the Early Day Motion last November included Keith Bradley, now Social Security Minister, Joyce Quin, Home Office Minister, Richard Caborn, Environment and Transport Minister, and Angela Eagle, Environment and Transport Minister. Downing Street sources said that the MPs had then been backbenchers and had not been bound by the Government's stance.

David McLetchie, vice-chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party, branded the move "hypocrisy" and demanded an apology from the Prime Minister. David Rendel MP, the Liberal Democrat social security spokesman, said: "It is false economy to scrimp and save over keeping Britain's pensioners warm during the winter. The refusal to boost cold weather payments will force elderly people into hospitals."



Chasing fame: Maggie Johnson-Myers training for the triathlon world championships in Perth next month with a pack of 30 bloodhounds. "It's like being a fugitive and you do panic a bit," said the athlete from Hanley Castle, Hereford and Worcestershire. "But when they catch up, all they do is wag their tails, jump up and lick your face"

Human rights plan 'may hit press freedom'

BY POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government will come under renewed pressure next week to ensure that new legislation does not curb press freedom. Ministers are being urged to make clear in Parliament that the Human Rights Bill, which will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into British law, is not intended to restrict media activity.

The Bill, which has its Second Reading in the House of Lords on Monday, will give every individual "the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence". Although it will also guarantee the right to freedom of expression, there are fears that it could provoke cases from individuals under media scrutiny.

Lawyers have warned that judgments in favour of such litigants could lead effectively to a privacy law. Media industry representatives have been lobbying the Home Office for an amendment exempting the press, or a ministerial statement explaining that journalists are not an intended target.

The Government is highly unlikely to agree to an amendment. However, it will seek to reassure the media, by arguing vigorously that the legislation should not have an adverse impact on press freedom.

Santha Rasiah, head of legal and editorial affairs at the Newspaper Society, said: "It may well be a question for the courts' interpretation, therefore it would be helpful to have a statement in Parliament to reinforce that."

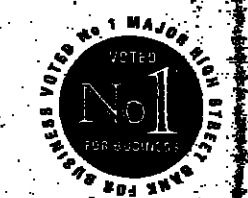
Concern has also been heightened by imminent changes to data protection laws, which the Government must introduce to comply with a European directive.

A new Act is planned which will give individuals greater access to information held about them. For the first time, the law will cover non-computerised records, as well as giving people the right to know who is processing information about them and why.

Ms Rasiah said it could prevent journalists from investigating wrongdoing, by allowing anyone who came under scrutiny to demand access to information gathered or to block publication. Discussions are continuing with the Home Office over the possibility of a clause exempting the press from the Act.

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Cleopatra's city rises from harbour floor



Cleopatra: preferred death to humiliation in Rome
Michael Murphy sees Alexandria
surrender its underwater secrets

THERE is, truth to tell, little enough to see. The eye does not easily penetrate the murky waters of Alexandria's Eastern Harbour, and not at all on a day when squalls and driving rain send all sensible residents diving for cover.

But 20ft beneath the water's choppy surface another world is gradually being revealed, a world of ancient glories whose secrets are being unlocked by the applications of science.

For four months each year, when conditions are best suited, Franck Goddio, the founder of the Paris-based European Institute for Underwater Archaeology, has been exploring for remains of the Egyptian city founded in 332 BC by Alexander the Great to become the cultural capital of a world enlarged by his conquests.

A year ago M Goddio, 50, revealed his plans for the city under the sea, the long-suspected but never quite confirmed Royal Quarter. This is where Antony and Cleopatra held court, where Cleopatra killed herself rather than be taken in chains to Rome.

"The importance of Goddio's work cannot be overestimated," says Professor Fawzi el-Fakhurani, of the University of Alexandria, who supervises the archaeological aspects of the exploration. "Alexandria was the hub of civilisation at a crucial period in history, and today it is all

lost to us beneath the modern buildings. M Goddio's discoveries have confirmed that the majority of the Royal Quarter was built out into what is now the Harbour. We have the crucial areas."

The harbour-floor pictures on the monitor of the research vessel *Oceanix* were sharp and clear — here a row of fallen columns, there a small sphinx, then a block with an inscription in Greek, and a granite statue head thought to be Mark Antony.

The multinational team of divers and Egyptian archaeologists has worked this entire season on the 350-yard-long ancient island of Antirrhodos, with the *Oceanix* swinging with the tides but tethered directly above the concentrations of the work, just 500 yards



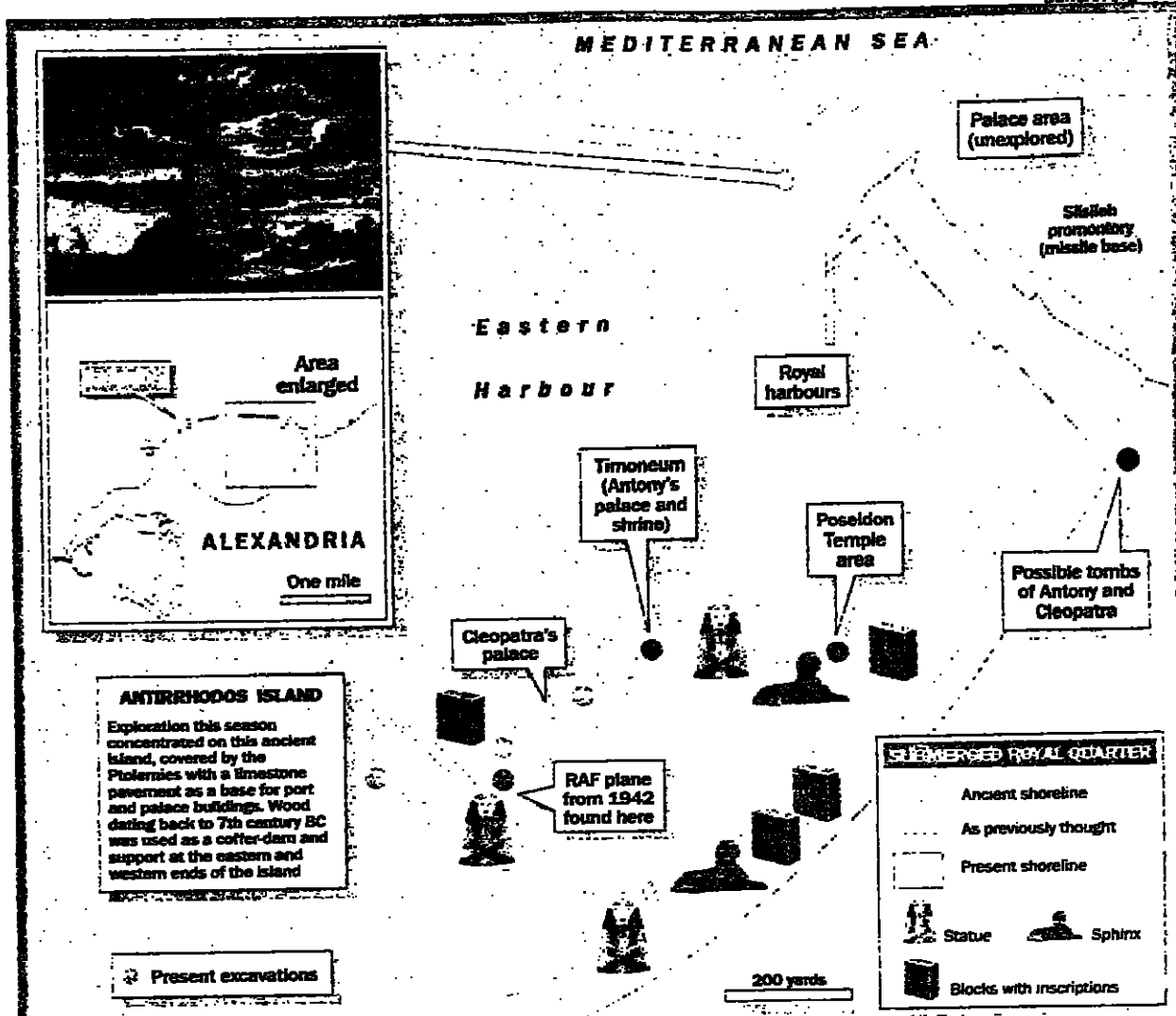
Franck Goddio admires a perfectly preserved sphinx

off the famous old Cecil Hotel. "We are very excited by what we have found," said M Goddio. "We have been able to confirm what Strabo said — that Antirrhodos was the only natural island in the harbour — and that it was completely paved in limestone blocks."

"Not only that, but it was covered with buildings. Altogether we have been able to identify and clean 1,065 stone pieces — statues, sphinxes, column drums, bases and capitals, many with inscriptions, which were tumbled

when the city was destroyed by a series of earthquakes and a tidal wave in about AD365." M Goddio's decision to go beyond surveying into excavation this season — he has "dug" in four areas on the ancient island and two on the former shoreline — is a brave one. He has his detractors in the archaeological establishment, and has been described as no more than a modern-day pirate or treasure-hunter.

It is an accusation that makes him smile. "I live for this work," he responds.



"Sure, I could make a lot of money by selling the beautiful objects I find. But I don't. I respect the local laws."

"It took me ten years to research this Alexandria site, and at least another 18 months to persuade all the authorities to let me dive... but at the end of it all the objects I find will stay where they are. If we remove any one of them, we lose the context of where it originally lay and another clue to the history we are trying to find will be gone."

Just as important a bone of

contention for the archaeological purist is his actual method of excavation. Not for M Goddio the painstaking scraping away at the earth with a small diamond-shaped trowel or a toothbrush. He uses more direct methods, and specifically a suction hose. It carries enormous potential for throwing out the baby with the bathwater. "When we have a modern sand dune over a wreck," explains M Goddio, "yes, I feel confident in using a 10in hose. After all, I know full well that what I'm sucking up

is virgin sand. But when I get down to the detailed work the hose gets smaller and smaller. In the hands of our skilled divers it can be used to swish away the sand from around a piece of papyrus the size of your thumbnail without touching it."

His discoveries are remarkable. At the northeastern tip of the island, for instance, right at the harbour entrance, he was astonished to find a double row of pine posts, upright in the ground, the inner supporting an array of

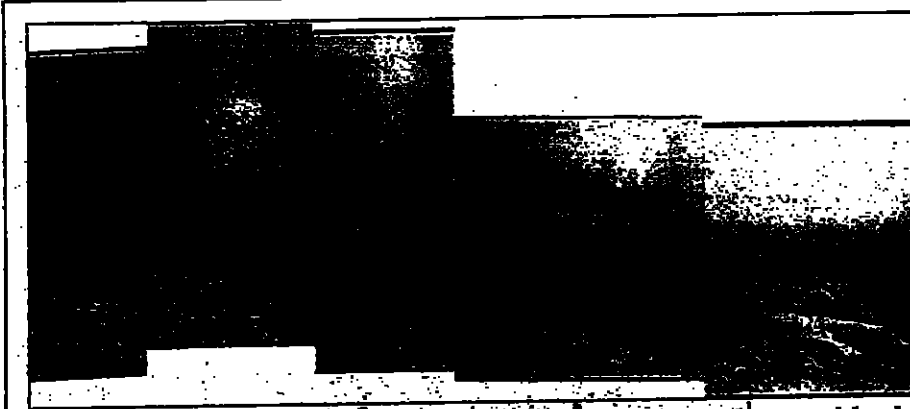
planks of elm — not a native tree, and probably from Anatolia — clearly placed to act as a coffer dam and foundation for heavier-weight material.

Carbon-14 dating of samples of the wood at the University of Grenoble has revealed 'dates' of the fifth century BC, but some pieces range back to the seventh. In other words, these wooden supports were there long before Alexander and probably form part of the ancient Egyptian village of Rhakotis on which Alexander's dream was based.

"This was the most important city in antiquity," said Professor Manfred Clauss, of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt. "It's only rivals were Rome and perhaps, fourth-century Istanbul."

Further explorations are being carried out. "There is much more to come, perhaps next year," M Goddio promises. "There are probably more remains under the water than there are on land, even in Egypt."

"The secret is in having the patience to carry out the research before you dive."



An RAF wartime bomber, a hole in its spine, rests on an underwater island

BOMBER CAME DOWN IN ANCIENT WAR ZONE

ONE unexpected find was the remains of a Royal Air Force aircraft, sitting virtually intact on the harbour bottom, its left wing and wheel resting on Antirrhodos island just inches from ancient column drums (Michael Murphy writes).

"We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw it on the monitor as we trawled our side-scan sonar from the catamaran *Kaimiloa*," said Gérard Schnapp, a scientist who has transferred his loyalty from the French equivalent of the Atomic Energy Authority to seek out undersea remains for Franck Goddio. "We sent divers down immediately."

What they found is a two-engine RAF

Bristol, probably a Beaufort torpedo-bomber — 60ft long — with a gaping hole in its spine. No identifying code numbers remain, but locals recall such an aircraft going down in October or November 1942.

At that time Beauforts based in Malta and the Western Desert were playing a crucial role in the Battle of El Alamein by harrying Rommel's supply ships from Crete. "There are no human remains on board," said M Goddio, "and it is an astonishing thought that today's science can pinpoint evidence that the area was still being fought over 2,000 years after the Battle of Actium removed Cleopatra from the throne."

MARCO POLO.

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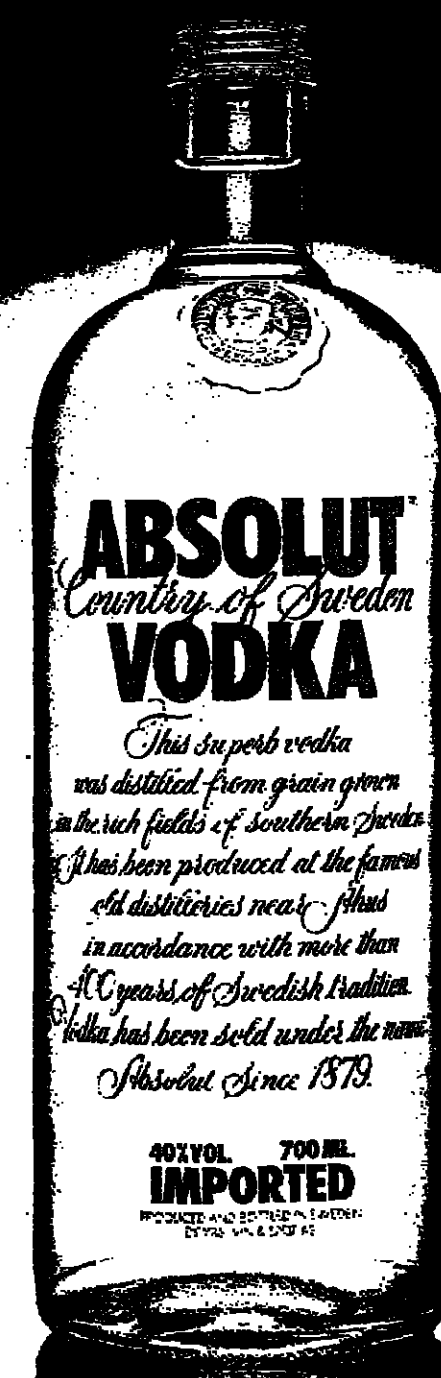


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Schools join up for a writing revival

David Charter reports on how the word has spread from infant school that found the old way was best



The learner: a Herne Bay six-year-old shows his command of joined-up writing

Schools are demanding copies of a research report on an idea which is claimed to give four-year-olds a head start in life: it is called joined-up handwriting.

The report for the Teacher Training Agency describes a system used with spectacular success in a Kent infants' school, based on *le graphisme*, the French system of teaching handwriting. Trainee teachers in France spend 60 hours learning how to teach handwriting; British teachers say they spend one hour in their four-year course. Fiona Thom-

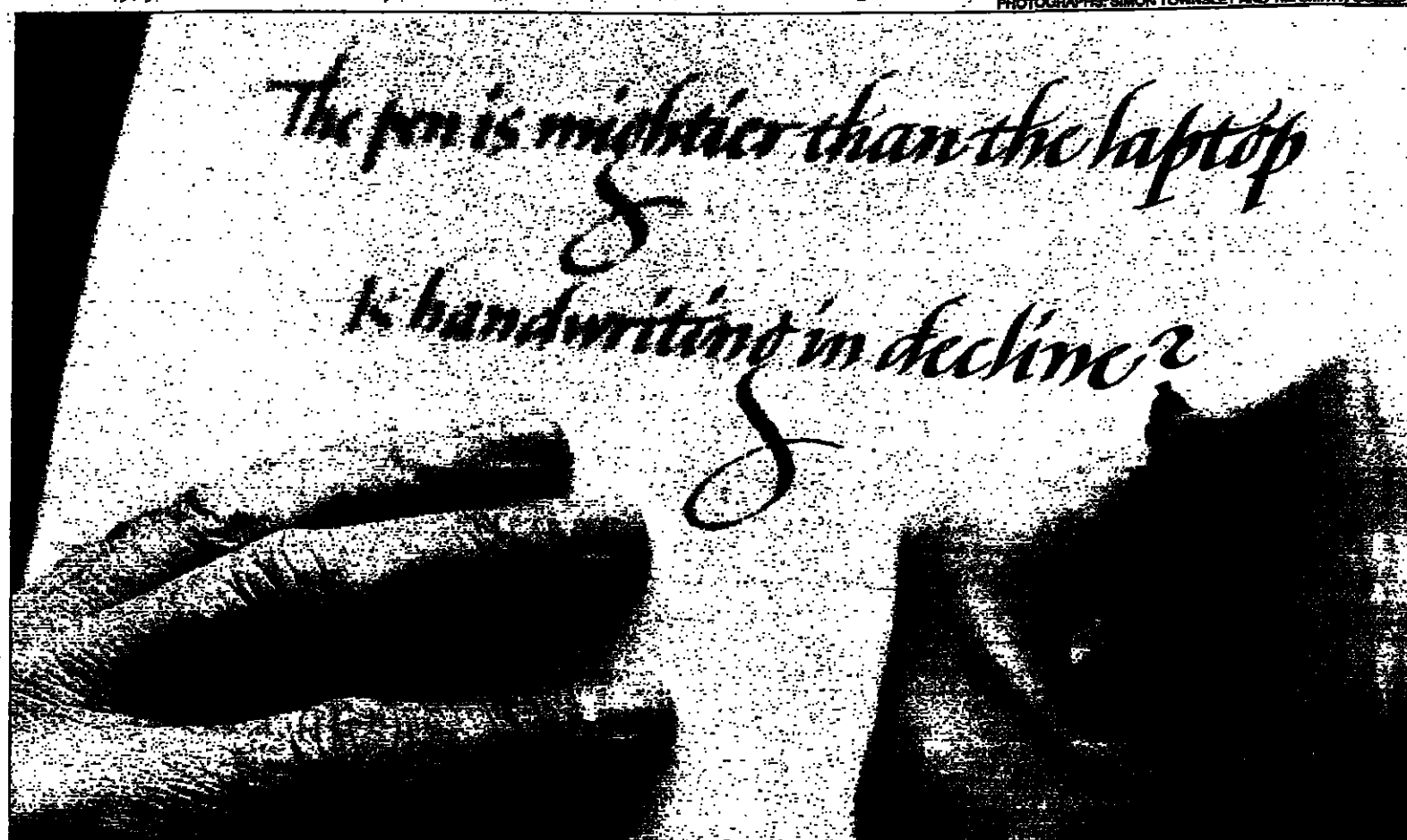
as, author of the research at Herne Infant School in Herne Bay, said that parents and other schools had been amazed to find her class of five-year-olds happily using joined-up writing, while most children of the same age could barely write two letters together on a line.

So many teachers, researchers and graphologists want to visit the school that it has had to schedule special viewing days. "We have been inundated with secondary schools who have said the children coming in from junior schools are writing so badly it means they

lack speed for their GCSE scripts," she said.

The research began when she received a letter from a French six-year-old and marvelling at the child's advanced handwriting. In research funded by the Teacher Training Agency, she visited teachers across the Channel and adapted *le graphisme* to her own classroom.

The children spend their first 12 weeks at school intensively cutting, folding, tearing, using Plasticine and developing their finger skills. They are then taught basic letter shapes in joined script, writing "a" not



Master of the craft: Brian Walker at work. He says: "If children can write fluently, they have the tools to communicate effectively"

in the usual printed, or "ball and stick", construction expected of infants, but by flowing through the downstroke without taking the pen off the paper.

"Once they have learned c, a, t in this way, they can begin to form words and they write

on lines from four years old," said Mrs Thomas. "We have compared their work with what happened before, and the quality of their creative thinking has improved immeasurably. They punctuate earlier and their awareness of sentence structure is more

mature. There is also some evidence that, if you have learned good handwriting early on, it helps your spelling."

By the time children leave aged seven for junior school, all of them, including those with learning difficulties and special needs, are writing fluently. "We think presentation affects children's self-esteem and special-needs children benefit enormously," she said.

"Handwriting is not taught in many schools. It is picked up by osmosis. Many infant schools do 'emergent writing' — they allow children to make marks supposed to represent their thoughts, and read it back to the teacher. This is reinforcing incorrect 'formation of letters in the shape of' writing. If you teach print

first, you have got to relearn it later."

Brian Walker, a fellow of the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society and former head teacher, said the method could ensure handwriting's ability to survive in the face of growing pressure to teach keyboard skills. "New technology is very powerful, but I think there will always be a need to communicate by hand in schools. If young children can write fluently, legibly and quickly, they will have the tools necessary to communicate effectively."

Until 1916, children were taught copperplate style as soon as they picked up pencils. However, the printed method was then introduced so their writing would resemble more closely what they read in

textbooks. Predictions of the demise of handwriting have been made often during the past 100 years, with the arrival of the typewriter, the telephone and now computers.

At the Queenswood School, Hatfield, each girl has a laptop computer for all lessons, and its principal, Clarissa Farr, has predicted that handwriting will become a specialist activity, "as rarefied as medieval illuminated script".

However, Mrs Thomas and Mr Walker are agreed that the call in the national curriculum for good handwriting, with extra marks awarded in the tests for seven and 11-year-olds, have helped to revive interest in the skill.

Leading article, page 23

"CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE..."

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your legs, your body, your arms, your hands or your head. You can't move any

of your facial muscles. You can't swallow so that saliva runs unchecked down

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your cheek and up the side of your nose. Now you feel it slowly moving down

the corner of your mouth. It

continues to move up the side of

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Green technology cuts toxic fumes despite rise in traffic

By David Hume
Motorway Editor

POISONOUS exhaust fumes have been cut by more than a fifth, even though traffic continues to grow, the AA said yesterday. Emissions from cars, vans and lorries are falling rapidly as new technology, particularly the introduction of the catalytic converter, cleans up the gases which come from vehicle tailpipes.

The level of exhaust pollution during April, May and

June this year was 22 per cent lower than in the same quarter of 1992, before catalysts were made compulsory on new petrol-engined vehicles. Pollution over that time was up 6 per cent higher than in the first quarter, but traffic was 11 per cent heavier. The measurements were produced for the AA by the National Environment Technology Centre.

Martin Maeso, AA head of environmental policy, said: "Although vehicle usage has increased in the last five years,

cars are becoming cleaner and are not, as the environmental lobby would have us believe, solely to blame for the country's air quality problems." The AA said that buses and lorries pumped out proportionally more pollutants than cars, yet were not the focus of government attention.

Roger Higman, of Friends of the Earth, said: "Government health standards are still being broken and will continue to be until we see reductions in the level of traffic."

Lift-test tower is new listed building

By John Shaw

A CONCRETE tower, used for testing lifts and erected only 15 years ago, became the newest listed building in Britain yesterday.

The 40ft Express Lifts tower in Weedon Road, Northampton, received Grade II listing by the Government on the advice of English Heritage after a request from Northampton council. It followed the takeover of Express by Otis Lifts, which is closing the site and selling it for redevelopment.

Officials feared that the tower might be demolished, but English Heritage included it as a unique structure "important as a demonstration of the importance of lift technology to modern tall-building construction. It is also a significant local landmark."

The tower is higher than Salisbury Cathedral — 404ft — and is the only testing tower in Britain.

The structure houses three shafts used for testing high-speed, hydraulic and medium-speed lifts. There are two staircases, one the full height of the building, and a laboratory and other offices.

The upper part of the tower has a distinctive jagged shape with pierced openings and bracings to reduce wind resistance. There is an observation room at the top which overlooks the surrounding countryside.

The tower was built to the designs of Simpson and Walton, with the Michael Barclay Partnership acting as engineers, in 1980-1982.

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Grouse experiment is a costly failure

A FIVE-YEAR experiment to allow birds of prey to breed without interference on one of Scotland's best-known sporting estates has seen a catastrophic decline in grouse.

The 12,000-acre Langholm Moor, in the Borders, which once boasted grouse bags of more than 4,000 a year, recorded fewer than 100 in 1996. In August only 51 grouse were shot, rendering it unviable as a commercial moor.

The Earl of Dalkeith, who offered the moor in 1992 for use in a joint experiment conducted by conservation bodies, admitted yesterday that the result left him "in a complete hole". Maintaining the estate, with its five gamekeepers, costs him nearly £100,000 a year. But without enough birds to attract shooters, he faces the prospect of having to abandon a grouse moor whose records date from the First World War.

He has given the conservation groups until February to come up with a solution, which could include changing the law to allow the culling of the hen harriers and peregrine falcons that prey on grouse.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, one of the groups involved, now has to decide whether to support such a move. Dame Barbara Young, its chief executive, said she would work with shooting interests and land managers, but added that it was unlikely

the society would ever accept that hen harriers, which it considered an endangered species, could be legally shot.

A 148-page report on the experiment, which cost £500,000 to prepare, is one of the most detailed scientific studies carried out on grouse and birds of prey. Gamekeepers on the estate, who traditionally regard harriers and peregrine as a threat to grouse, co-operated in protecting their nests and their young from collectors or illegal killers.

Their numbers grew steadily: the harriers from two to 14 breeding females and peregrine from three to six pairs during the five-year study.

At the same time, grouse numbers declined. In the last two years of the study, when bird of prey numbers were highest, they removed about 30 per cent of grouse in the winter, 30 per cent of the potential breeding stock in

spring and 37 per cent of chicks.

The report, which was launched in Edinburgh yesterday by Lord Dalkeith and Professor Ian Newton, of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, pointed out that the amount of heather on Langholm had reduced by nearly 50 per cent since the war, because of sheep-grazing, but said that this was not the reason for the grouse's decline. However, harriers killed more grouse in areas where there was a mixture of heather and grass than when the hills were covered with heather alone.

Later, Magnus Magnusson, chairman of Scottish Natural Heritage, announced the creation of a joint working group to examine the way ahead for grouse moors. Good land management meant not only preserving the heather uplands of Scotland but providing employment, he said.

Among the possible options he outlined were the legal killing of birds of prey; moving them from one area to another; or introducing golden eagles, which keep harrier numbers down.



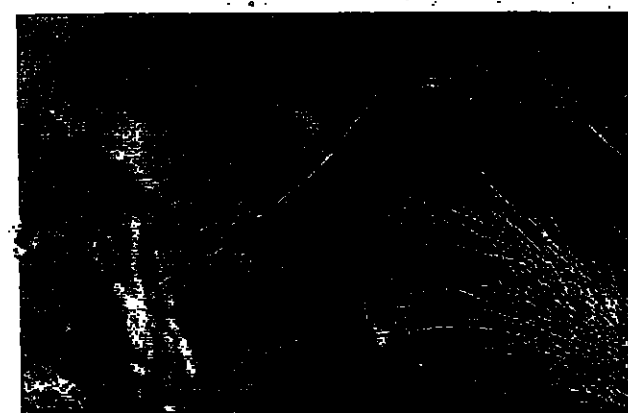
A peregrine falcon and chicks: the number of breeding pairs on Langholm Moor doubled over five years

THE OWNER

Richard Dalkeith, who owns Langholm Moor, says that the report established the link between high numbers of raptors and declining grouse. He hopes that environmental bodies find a solution, but said that his offer of the moor as a wildlife experiment could not be open-ended. He set the deadline for finding a way to re-establish Langholm as a moor for driven grouse — "or we all walk away the losers".

THE RSPB

The society has agreed to talks on all options, including controlling raptors by discouraging nesting or moving them away. But Barbara Young, its chief executive, said that it would have to be convinced that damage was being done, that every alternative to lethal methods was explored, and that any solution was socially acceptable. Above all, she said, it must attack the cause rather than the symptoms.



Red grouse: decline has made Langholm unviable

GAME TRUST

The Game Conservancy Trust, which holds the ring between bird protectors and landowners, believes the best feature of the report is the joint commitment by all parties to find a solution. Dick Potts, its director-general, said that the agreement to consider all alternatives, including the trust's favoured option of moving birds of prey to other areas, was "brilliant". He welcomed the degree of urgency that Lord Dalkeith had introduced.

HERITAGE

Scottish Natural Heritage, which is responsible to the Scottish Office, believes that the plight of Scotland's heather uplands demands a change in the nature of land subsidy. A policy of supporting the habitat should replace the present subsidy arrangements, which have maintained sheep on hills long after they have ceased to be profitable. This would mean switching resources to land management instead of hill-farming.

Catholic leader attacks Blair's 'condom society'

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

CARDINAL Thomas Winning, leader of Scotland's Roman Catholics, yesterday attacked Labour's Britain as a "condom society" in which people were used up and thrown away.

Cardinal Winning accused the Prime Minister of failing to live up to his pledges to promote family values and education and claimed that the Government was pandering to the "permissive society" and that broken pre-election promises had left the country in a "moral mess". He attacked the Government's decision to introduce tuition fees for university students.

He said: "A succession of moves by the new Government seems to contradict Mr Blair's assertion that every piece of legislation is to be tested for its effect on the family." He said that moves to lower the age of consent for homosexuals, to allow homosexuals to serve in the Armed Forces, and to offer immigration rights to unmarried and homosexual partners did nothing to strengthen the family.

The Government has said that there will be a free vote on reducing the homosexual age of consent during this parliamentary session. No decision has been made on permitting homosexuals to serve in the Forces. The Government is awaiting a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights.

The cardinal said it was "extraordinary" that a Labour Government had introduced

tuition fees and abolished student grants with "hardly a whimper" from the back benches or the country. Neither policy had been in Labour's manifesto, he said.

Students now faced leaving college with a debt of more than £12,000, he said. "It is an obvious disincentive: it is not going to encourage ordinary, decent, working-class families to send their children for higher education."

The cardinal's criticism of the Prime Minister was broadcast during BBC Radio 2's *Week of Faith* series. He has made previous attacks on Mr Blair, focusing on his stance on abortion.

Cardinal Winning said: "We live in a permissive society, what I would call a condom society, because we use people and then throw them away, discard them. The source of that permissiveness is the Abortion Act."

About five million unborn babies had "disappeared" since abortion was legalised in 1967, he said. The number of abortions was rising despite contraception being more widely available.

He said he sensed a changing mood in the country towards abortion. Rather than a review of the Act, what was needed was more information to allow people to see the pain an unborn child went through before "it is sucked in pieces from its mother's womb", he said.

Downing Street said it was not prepared to respond to the cardinal's criticism.

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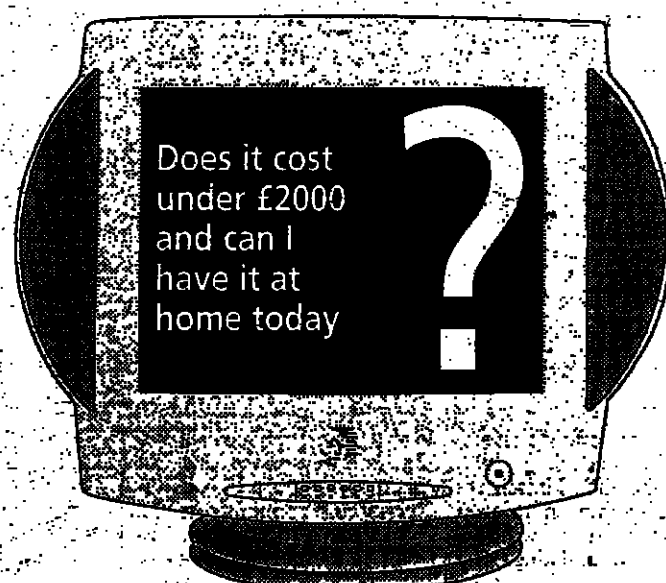
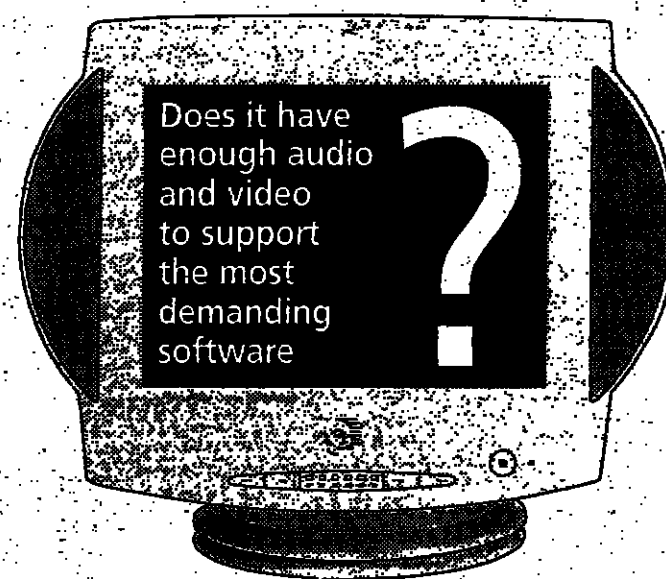
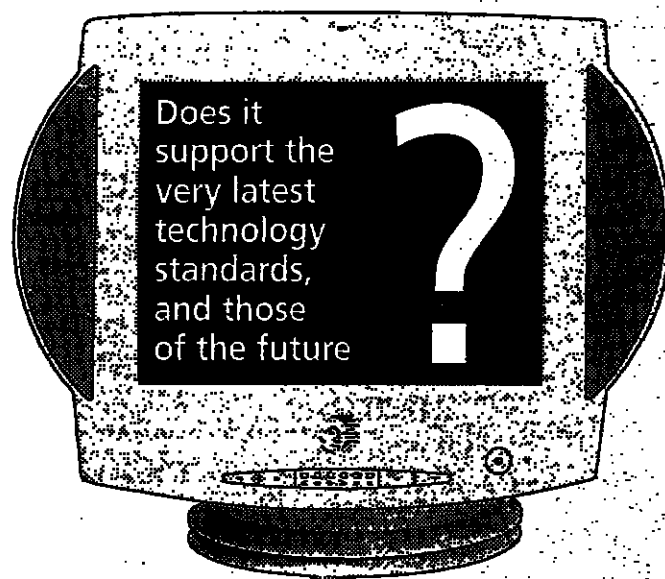
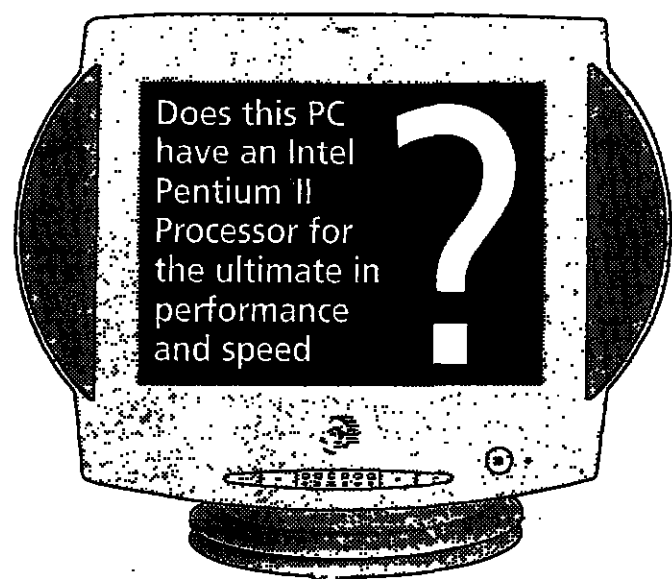
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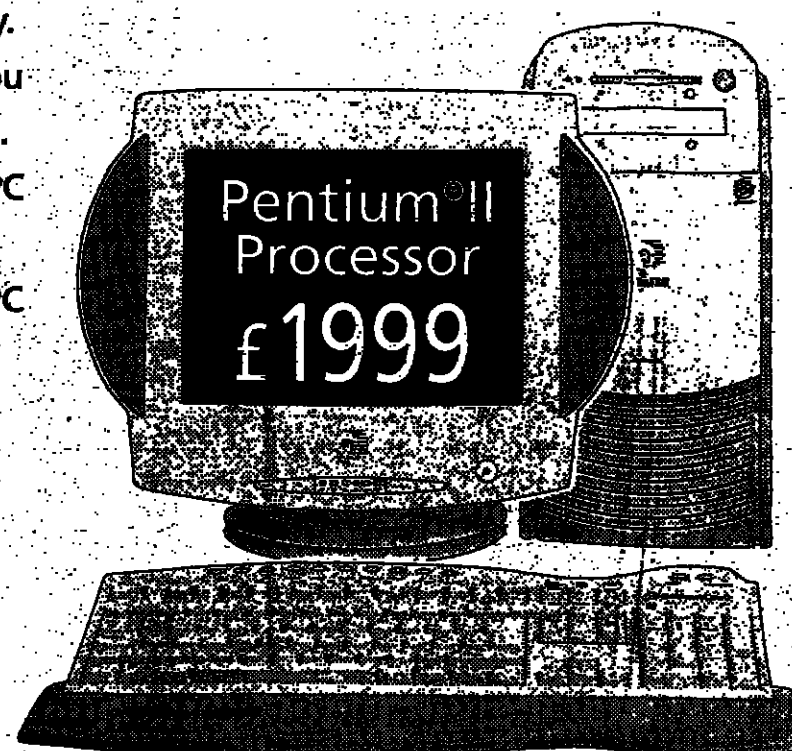
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Crowning glory in Lesotho pulls capacity crowd

IF THE Royal Family really wishes to reform itself into a popular and populist monarchy, it might usefully consider crowning the future King Charles III in front of a capacity crowd at Wembley Stadium.

That would be the British equivalent of the coronation attended yesterday by the Prince of Wales when David Mphahlele, a 34-year-old bachelor and an old boy of Ampleforth, was crowned King Letsie III of Lesotho, watched by 25,000 of his ecstatic subjects in the national football stadium. Their roars equalled those from English fans in Rome when Glenn Hoddle's team qualified for the World Cup.

The King is the great-grandson of Moshoeshoe I, the father of the landlocked, mountainous, Southern African nation, who secured the protection of Queen Victoria for his people against advancing colonial forces in 1884.

It is his second occupation of what has recently been a troubled throne. He was installed by the military Government in 1990 in place of his father, King Moshoeshoe II, but stepped down in 1995 when his father returned from exile in Britain and the Netherlands. He resumed the throne after his father was killed in a road accident last year. Of the foreign dignitaries who filed into the royal box, the loudest ovation was for President

Mandela, whose country surrounds Lesotho. The Prince of Wales drew a lesser ovation, partly because the crowd could not see him. The master of ceremonies humbly begged him on to stand up and show himself, which the Prince did. The crowd responded as if to a late West Ham goal.

When the King himself entered the stadium in an open Land Rover, the crowd rose cheering and ululating. The King did a lap of honour before inspecting an honour guard.

Festivities began at nine in the morning and lasted for a good three hours. The entire country was on public holiday, and a substantial proportion of its two million population appeared to be crammed into the stadium. There was singing, dancing and, inevitably, exceedingly long speeches.

The coronation ceremony itself was brief. It was a far cry from the solemn pomp of Westminster Abbey but it had



Alan Hamilton reports from Maseru, Lesotho, on the colourful coronation of an Ampleforth old boy and bachelor in search of a queen for his tiny kingdom

a dignity of its own. The King, in a dark suit with an embroidered gold crocodile climbing up his chest, mounted a dais. For a coronation robe his uncle placed a leopard skin cloak on his shoulders. Instead of the Imperial State Crown, he placed a coloured headband round the King's temples and tucked a feather in it.

In the King's hand, instead of orb and sceptre, he placed an ornate wooden stick.

Then five clergy, representing the Catholic, Anglican and evangelical denominations that predominate in Lesotho, placed their hands on the King's head and recited prayers. The King, a practising Catholic, crossed himself.

There was further hymn singing including *God Save the Queen* in Sotho, the local language, and African choirs.

And then there was the Prince of Wales. After some speeches from President Mandela and Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Prince stepped to the microphone to deliver a message from the Queen.

In it, she recalled visiting Lesotho exactly 50 years ago with her father, King George VI, and hinted at the country's recent troubled political history. "The Commonwealth today is a community enjoying great racial and religious diversity and committed to the principles of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good government. I trust that, under Your Majesty's wise guidance, Lesotho will continue to play a full part in this growing community and in upholding these principles."

The Prince was listened to politely, but he earned solid applause when he ended the message with the Queen's wish "for an abundance of *Khotso, Pula, Nala* — peace, rain and fertility. His Sotho pronunciation must have been near-perfect.

There remains the vexed question of a wife for the

newly-crowned King, who said recently that the matter was becoming increasingly urgent, not least because his mother was forever nagging him. Polygamy does not reign in the Lesotho royal house, so King Letsie III needs only one bride. Somewhere in yesterday's crowd must have lurked the perfect mate for a public school-educated former rugby player with a law diploma from Bristol and a handsome little kingdom in want of a queen.

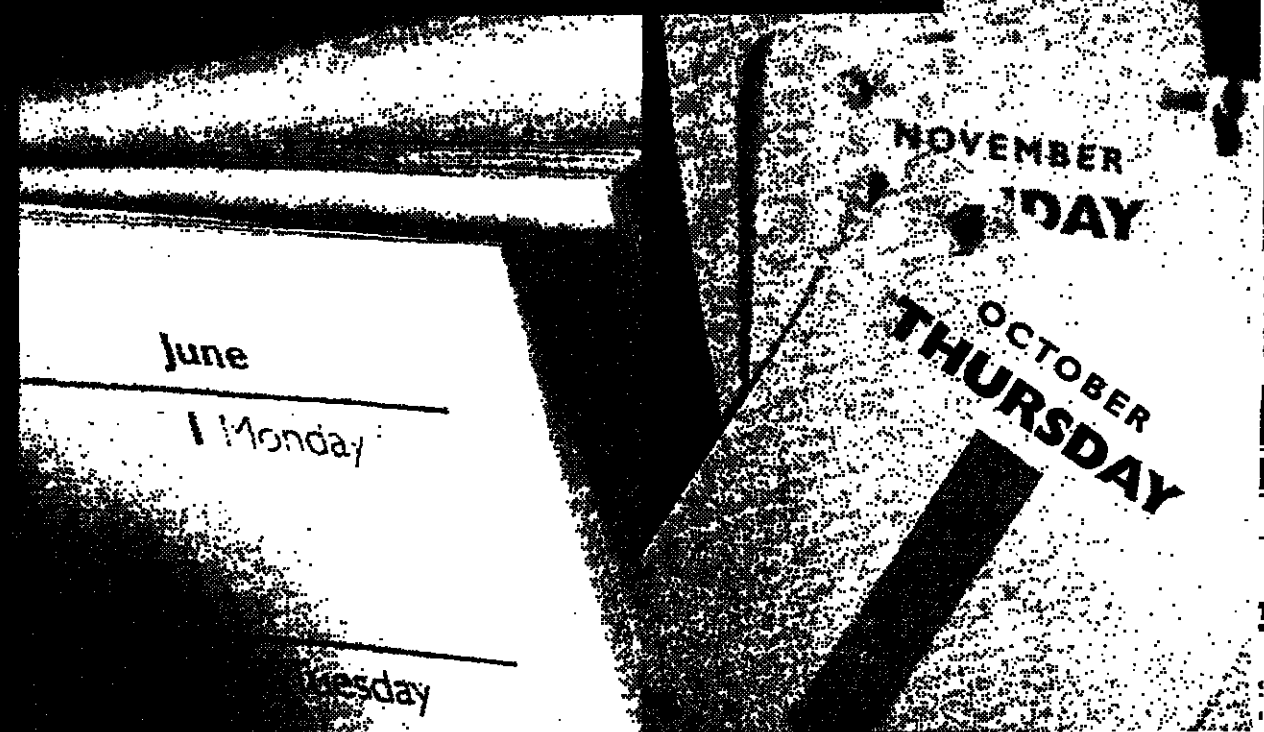


King Letsie III of Lesotho greets the Prince of Wales during the coronation festivities staged yesterday in the national football stadium

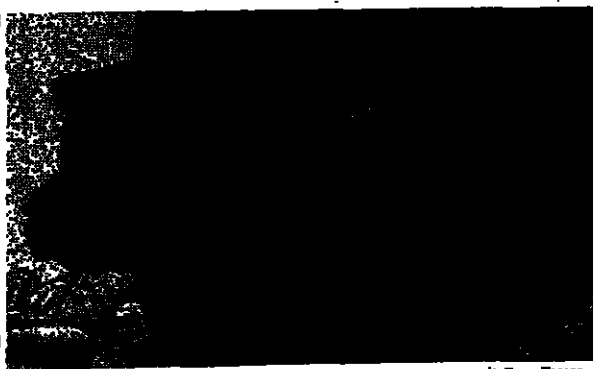
The crowd responded to the Prince of Wales as if to a late West Ham goal



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No jokes please, it's Harvard

I have had to tear myself away from New York this week and live unpretentiously out of a suitcase in Cambridge, the riverside Massachusetts town near Boston now much better known for the ill-starred Louise Woodward than for the oldish university in its midst. Harvard, the polemicist John Tierney tells me, is "arguably one of the finest

schools in eastern Massachusetts, and possibly the best of the universities by the River Charles".

Over a meal of spiced lamb chops (cooked rare over a coal fire), Mr Tierney, an alumnus of Yale, raged against the damage that Harvard graduates inflict on the world when they assume positions of power.

"I was married to someone

from Harvard once," he said, before trailing off into a silence that suggested that the decision may not have been a wise one.

After this conversation, I could not possibly approach Cambridge with an open mind. In fact, so far as Harvard is concerned, my mind was made up long ago. I have been there before (oddly enough, to give a lecture to

some tedious undergraduate society, for whose bankrupt office-holders I then had to buy dinner), and I detest the place.

Part of the problem lies in the "Cambridge syndrome". By this I mean the joyless, Cromwellian misanthropy that wafts from the Cam and the Charles. This spirit is nowhere more appar-

ent than in Harvard's students. After each exhausting day at the trial of Louise Woodward, I would repair with British colleagues to the pubs and bars by Harvard Square, in search of a more sophisticated brand of "vodka pop" than the sort provided by the area's boorish taxi drivers.

I must have spoken to more than 50 students in four days

and, with the exception of a red-haired philosopher who talked about "the Kantian ethics of lap-dancing", I found them all to be banal, vapid, irksome, uninformed, badly dressed, long-winded and monumentally earnest.

The last characteristic comes from an intense self-consciousness, from an over-blown sense that Harvard is "America's greatest cultural

jewel". It is, of course, simply nothing of the sort, and the phrase was thrown at me by a student who works on the *Harvard Crimson*, the campus rag.

Over the years, hundreds of *Crimson* wallahs have graduated to jobs on *The New York Times*, taking with them their Harvard hyper-solemnity

and their lack of a sense of fun. Written by Harvard graduates, *The New York Times* is the dullest newspaper in America.

It is a Roundhead paper that Cromwell would love, were he ever to set foot on earth again. Naturally, the old marines would be in his element in Harvard, too. And that's the veritas (Harvard's motto).

Hiller B. Zobel, the judge in the Woodward case, appeared always to enjoy the company of British journalists. His years spent as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford have, apparently, left him with an abiding love for British newspapers.

But some of his facts are dated. On being told by Barry Wigmore, a veteran of the British press corps here, that he wrote for *The Express*, the judge sighed: "Ah... The Express! The kindly Wigmore was too mortified to point out it now had another sobriquet — *The Express*. Perhaps someone should tell Judge Zobel.

Professor looks to future of mind, body and sole

BY THE year 2050, it seems, we will all be living on an "intelligent planet", populated by robots which far surpass human reasoning abilities, have feelings and even dream at night.

So says Michio Kaku, a professor of theoretical physics at the City College of New York, and the author

of a wacky new book called *Visions*, an account of how science will revolutionise the 21st century.

The year 2050, too, sounds intriguing. By then, we will all be living in "smart" homes filled with "smart" tables, chairs, kitchen appliances and other objects that "sense our presence" and that carry out our

needs. For example, a "smart" stereo system will lower its volume when we are talking on the telephone.

Shoes, however, occupy a special place in the Kaku scheme of things. "Shoes that think" will allow people to trade information by means of a handshake alone. "Because skin is salty and conducts electricity, a

resumé can travel electrically from shoe to hands and then to one's acquaintance's hand and shoe. This may ultimately prove to be a convenient way to exchange large computer files with someone on the street."

Professor Kaku leaves one question unanswered: jaces, buckles or slip-ons?

In the steam room of my hotel, I heard a man say this the other day, of an incident in which a referee had sent him off for swearing: "I told him I wasn't calling anyone names. I was just venting, just venting to myself."

Venting? The word has nothing to do with the urinary ducts of fish. It comes, instead, from "to give vent to".

A language sage I spoke to was quite agitated: "This happens in America, you know, the transitive becoming the intransitive. It happens all the time, and there's no stopping these people from doing it."

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Media play down Jiang trip to US

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

IF THE roles had been reversed and it had been President Clinton in China, hosted by President Jiang Zemin, principal events would have been staged for prime-time television and images of Mr Clinton's every move transmitted back home.

Yet the Chinese leader's visit to the United States is getting bland, even cursory, treatment in Beijing. "It is as if Jiang's political foes are in charge of the Chinese media," one diplomat said here yesterday.

There has been no live television coverage and reporting of the visit on the main evening news is heavily edited. Viewers have not seen President Jiang, 71, taking a dip in the sea at Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. Nor did they see him wearing a colonial three-cornered hat in Williamsburg, Virginia. Demonstrations in America over China's political prisoners, suppression of religion, and Tibet policy have also gone unreported.

The People's Daily reported

a toast by Virginia Allen, wife of Governor George Allen, to the Chinese party chief in Williamsburg.

But edited out were Mrs Allen's praise for "the universal human principles upon which America is built — freedom, liberty and representative democracy".

Faced with a possible downturn in the Chinese economy, after the problems of the "tiger" economies in South-East Asia, people appear to have more mundane concerns than their leader's trip abroad.

"Most of my friends are worried about lay-offs," said one Chinese man. By last night, the Chinese media had not reported President Jiang's meeting with US congressmen, a number of whom are critics of China's human rights record. Instead, the emphasis remained on President Jiang's welcome and the fact that, as the Chinese media put it, the two leaders "have become good friends".

Photograph, page 21

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Pope condemns Christian role in anti-Semitism

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Pope yesterday admitted that Christian prejudice, fuelled by misinterpretation of the Gospels, had contributed to the persecution of Jews down the ages, culminating in a failure to prevent the Holocaust.

Using the Hebrew word *Shoah* to the Holocaust, he declared: "To the moral injury of all genocide, the Shoah added the injury of hatred, which runs counter to God's plan for salvation. The Church itself is directly confronted with responsibility for this hatred."

He said many Christians had done everything to save the persecuted, to the point of risking their own lives. But he added: "The spiritual resistance of many others was not that which humanity expected from the disciples of Christ."

Vatican officials said yesterday's remarks, made to an international seminar in the Vatican on "The Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism", were not the full papal *mea culpa* on the persecution of the Jews in the Christian era which would be made next year.

But both the seminar and the Pope's address were part of "preparations" for a "definitive statement", officials said. "This is the most difficult of the papal requests for pardon," said *L'Espresso*. "Two thousand years of anti-Semitism weigh on the Church like a mountain."

Addressing the three-day seminar, which ends today, the Pope recalled that Jesus had himself been a Jew and had "lived in a Jewish world". The Jews of the Old Testament had been divinely chosen to

make a Covenant with God, or Yahweh, but the concept of a "Chosen People" had aroused jealousy and hatred.

The Pope said some Christians had misused anti-Jewish remarks in the Gospels, intended by the Evangelists to mark off the new religion of Christianity from its Jewish roots. He is thought to have had in mind passages such as those in St John which refer repeatedly to the Jews as the enemies of Christ and blame them for his death. St John observes (7:1) that Jesus "avoided Judaea because the Jews were looking for a chance to kill him."

The Pope said some Christians had "erroneously and unjustly misinterpreted the New Testament with regard to the Jewish people". This had stirred up "hostile sentiments" and had led to "a sleep of conscience" during successive waves of anti-Semitic persecution. Racism was a "negation of the most profound identity of human beings" and anti-Semitism was at all times "without justification".

It is only 30 years since the phrase "perfidious Jews" was dropped from the Roman Catholic liturgy. Jewish groups have demanded that, in addition to making amends, the Vatican should open its archives to allow scholars to examine claims that Vatican officials and Catholic priests helped fleeing Nazis to escape at the end of the Second World War, and banked gold taken from Jewish victims.

The Pope did not mention the archives, but referred pointedly to *Summi Pontificatus*, a condemnation of racism by Pope Pius XII (1939-58), who is accused by some historians of failing to do enough to speak out against, or even prevent, Nazi atrocities.

Shroud 'is genuine'

Rome: A Swiss archaeologist claims to have proof that the shroud of Turin is genuine and not medieval fake (Richard Owen writes).

Maria Grazia Siliano, a Paris-based archaeologist who has studied the shroud for 16 years, said her forthcoming book *The Shroud* would show that it was the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. It is kept in a chapel at Turin Cathedral, where it was rescued from fire last April.

Carbon dating by laboratories in Britain, the United States and Switzerland in 1988 suggested the shroud, brought to France in about 1350 by Crusaders returning from the Holy Land, was a 13th or 14th-century forgery.

But Dr Siliano said the carbon dating had been misleading, because the piece of cloth chosen for the tests had been repaired and restored



Turin shroud: saved from fire last year

at least five times since 1400. She also claimed that "electronic tests" had shown the words "Jesus of Nazareth" invisible to the naked eye, were imprinted on the cloth, but did not say in what language.

Frightful cost of Hallowe'en

FROM BROUEN MADDOCK IN WASHINGTON

LAST night's Hallowe'en was one of the most commercial yet for Americans, to parents' horror but to no one's surprise. Spending on costumes and sweets to give children for "trick or treating" from door to door was expected to reach \$2.5 billion (£1.5 billion), a fifth more than last year.

Parents in Britain should be warned. In America, spending on Hallowe'en is growing far faster than for Christmas,

according to a *Washington Post* report. The results of the Hallowe'en industry's promotional skills have been inescapable for a month. In towns, garish orange pumpkins carved with uneven grins are relatively scarce, a few perched tentatively on doorsteps defying passers-by to steal them.

In suburb and countryside, Hallowe'en comes into its full glory. Illuminated encampments of "life-size" witches and ghosts crouch in front gardens, while doorbells are

temporarily replaced with recordings of wailing.

This year, national spending on decorations and confectionery is expected to top \$1 billion. But it is the trick-or-treating costumes that really rack up the bills. As soon as children go back to school in September, they begin nagging their parents for the season's "must-have" fancy dress. This year, parents who are not prepared to put in hours of sewing are expected to shell out \$1.5 billion for the gear.



Saddam examines a machinegun presented to him this week to mark his referendum victory two years ago

Mossad 'revives plot to kill Saddam'

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli press yesterday gave prominence to reports that a five-year-old plan to kill President Saddam Hussein of Iraq had been revived by Mossad, the Israeli secret service.

The country's military censor permitted publication of details of the revived scheme because they first appeared in the London-based weekly newsletter *Foreign Report*. Senior Western security sources said that the accounts appeared authentic.

According to Israeli analysts, the plan

has been dusted down because of the need to re-establish Mossad's reputation in the Arab world following its bungled attempt to kill a Hamas agent in Jordan in September.

The 1997 plan is based on an operation aborted after the so-called Tze'elim 2 accident in November 1992 — it was named after the military base where five Israeli soldiers were killed in a last-minute dress rehearsal. A live missile was mistakenly launched towards a group of soldiers pretending to be Saddam's entourage.

Foreign Report, published by Jane's Information group and known for its

intelligence contacts, based its story on security sources in Tel Aviv. It said Mossad had taken over implementation of the plan from the Israeli Defence Force after bitter rivalry between the two during the planning for the 1992 operation.

The newsletter added: "Will the plan work? One of *Foreign Report's* well-placed security sources in Tel Aviv says the commandos have already been told to carry out a feasibility study along the lines of the 1992 plan. But our source warns that if this operation fails, there could almost be a war because Israel would have to engage half its air force to bring the commandos home."

Baghdad 'ready for military clash'

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN NEW YORK

IRAQ has given a warning it is ready for military confrontation over its move to expel American arms inspectors while Washington and its partners weigh options, including new sanctions.

The United Nations Security Council was last night discussing a response to Iraq after Baghdad barred two American members of the UN weapons inspection team who arrived on board a UN plane from Bahrain.

The Iraqis have given the ten Baghdad-based Americans on the 40-member team one week to leave the country, impairing UN efforts to judge whether Iraq is still hiding banned weapons.

The divisions within the 15-member council, which the Americans blame for triggering the crisis, remain unresolved. Western diplomats are considering re-submitting an American-British resolution threatening to ban Iraqi military and intelligence officers from travelling abroad unless they co-operate fully with the inspection team.

Despite the increasing international pressure, Iraq remains defiant. "We are on the defensive, but if they put the issue towards a military confrontation... we will not back down from the stand we took," an Iraqi MP, Sa'ad Kasim Hamoodi, said parliament.

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The stars in action: Eileen Downey, left, and David Smith. She is like a Yorkshire terrier, he says

Fame returns to hotel whose ship went out

The staff did not fight shy when a fly-on-the-wall TV crew came to stay at Liverpool's Adelphi, writes Philip Delves Broughton

IN ITS heyday, it catered for the famous and wealthy on their way to ocean cruises. In the classless Nineties, it will accept almost anyone—even a BBC film crew.

Liverpool's Adelphi hotel is the latest institution to follow the example of the Royal Opera House and Heathrow airport, and allow itself to feature in a fly-on-the-wall documentary series. Liverpoolian sensitivities are expected to be rather less touchy than some of the opera set.

The undisputed star of the eight-part *Hotel*, starting on Monday night, is expected to be the general manager, Eileen Downey, who is 42 and 5ft nothing. A native of the city, she declined an offer to see the series before it is broadcast.

"Of course you get fed up with a television crew hanging around all that time," she said. "There were definitely moments I wish they had not been there." In every episode, Mrs Downey is seen cajoling

her staff through crises and into action. She evicts prostitutes, hawks out porters and strikes deals for people to sleep on mattresses in conference rooms after the bomb threat at the Grand National.

Michael Morton, joint owner of Britannia Hotels, which bought a declining Adelphi in 1983, worried: "Eileen might have overacted in some scenes because she knew the camera was on her."

The Adelphi was built like a ship in 1912, for passengers and their servants arriving or departing on the great liners which docked at Liverpool. Roy Rogers once rode up its front steps on his horse, Trig-

ger. Many stayed here on the way to the final last voyage of the *Lusitania*. "This used to be a hotel just for the upper crust," said Mr Morton. "In the old days, half the people in here now wouldn't have been let through the front door."

The BBC camera crew stayed for nearly seven months and were granted complete access. Mr Morton said: "It is a warts-and-all documentary. It is not all sugar and spice in the hotel business. We wanted to reach people who don't know what the Adelphi is like."

Mrs Downey joined the staff 13 years ago, when Britannia had just bought the

hotel and half the floors were shut. After bringing up her two children, she found a job in the accounts department of the hotel where she had spent the first night of her marriage.

She kept an eye on every penny, became a manager, and five years ago was promoted to general manager. Since then, the hotel has become profitable. It has 402 rooms and more than 130,000 guests a year. She said: "I'm proud of what I've achieved. We have opened the Adelphi to everyone."

Today "Dr Love Shaft" runs a Seventies night in the nightclub. White marble remains in the corridors, but two main bars have been opened to non-residents. Among the other staff who feature in the series is David Smith, 52, the executive chef, who does the swearing for everyone. He says of Mrs Downey: "She's like one of those Yorkshire terriers who go for your ankles." She shrugs and smiles.



The majestic columns of the Adelphi hotel: 13 years ago, half the floors were shut

IN BRIEF

£40,000 contempt fine for paper

London's *Evening Standard* was fined £40,000 at the High Court yesterday over an article whose publication halted the trial of six men accused of escaping from Whitehall jail. Lord Justice Kennedy said that the article, which disclosed that some of the accused had been convicted of terrorist crimes, was a contempt which "had a very serious effect on the administration of justice".

Crash kills two

Two 16-year-olds died after a stolen car overturned and burst into flames. A girl was killed in the crash on the M3 near Southampton and a boy died in hospital. Another 16-year-old boy suffered minor injuries.

Pit sabotage

Two dozen activists caused tens of thousands of pounds of damage to open-cast mining machinery near Tibshelf, Derbyshire. They were among 300 environmental protesters who arrived in convoy from the M1.

Legion award

The Royal British Legion's success last year in restoring the two minutes' silence on November 11 was named public relations campaign of the year in *PR Week* and received a separate television news charity campaign award.

Penny pinchers

The Inland Revenue apologised for asking a Yorkshire businessman to return a tax rebate of one penny. Jonathan Waite was amused to get a cheque for £0.01 and "staggered" to be then asked to send it back.

Ban on term-time holidays 'would force up tour prices'

FROM ARTHUR LEATHLEY IN TENERIFE

MILLIONS of tourists would face higher holiday costs if ministers press ahead with plans to prevent children from taking holidays during term-time, travel industry leaders claimed yesterday.

Ministers are under heavy pressure from teachers to end the current rules that allow

parents to take their children out of school for up to ten days. Head teachers claim that more and more parents are taking their children on term-time holidays and disrupting their education.

Senior figures from the Association of British Travel Agents said yesterday that changing the rules would put huge pressure on tour operators, especially during the

peak summer season, and that this would be passed on to customers in higher prices.

Steven Freudmann, president of Abta, said yesterday, on the eve of the association's annual conference in Tenerife: "With more pressure put on, peak prices will undoubtedly go up."

Ian Reynolds, the association's chief executive, explained that tour operators

were able to hold prices down because they were able to spread the holiday season over a much longer period into spring and autumn.

Department of Education officials are talking with the travel industry about the plans, which are still in the consultation stage.

Holidaymakers' complaints about the

standard of their hotels or apartments soared by 80 per cent last year. The total number of complaints about accommodation made to Abta rose from 2,747 in 1995-96 to 4,943 in 1996-97. The figures coincided with a 65 per cent increase in the number of complaints about delayed and overbooked flights and 30 per cent rise in complaints about food.

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Roars herald last desperate flappings of old Emuphiles

Paddy Ashdown may call them the big beasts of the jungle, but for William Hague they're creatures from another age unable to cope with the new climate — dinosaurs determined to wreak havoc in a world that has changed.

Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke are not, however, diplomats thrashing around chaotically. The roars they emitted in the pages of *The Daily Telegraph* and on the *Today* programme were the product of careful planning.

Dinosaurs died out because their brains could not send signals to their bodies with sufficient speed to react to danger. Messrs Clarke and Heseltine have, in contrast, been remarkably nimble this week for big beasts.

It was just rather a pity for Hague's supporters that their momentum has been directed at trying to trample all over him.

What really rattled the dinosaurs' cage was the Shadow Cabinet meeting on the evening of Thursday the 23rd. It was at that meeting William Hague succeeded in doing what John Major never could.

He secured agreement from his colleagues for a campaign of opposition to the single currency at the next election.

Sceptical supporters of the new position may be exaggerating the importance of Europe as an issue in the public mind when they argue that such a stance from Major might have won the Tories the last election, but it could

Michael Gove hears the return of the dinosaurs to plague Hague with one final glorious burst of noise on Europe before going on a one-way trip along the road to extinction

certainly have prevented the haemorrhage of support to the Referendum Party and given stay-at-home Tories a cause to vote for.

Hague succeeded in winning round his Shadow Cabinet against a background of Labour turmoil but, according to one of those there, the reasoned case he put was not calculated as a response to the Government's current difficulties, but based on long-term strategy and principle.

Hague enjoyed surprisingly strong support for his stance from Sir Norman Fowler, a close friend of Clarke's, and more measured but still solid backing from the pro-European Stephen Dorrell. According to one present they "entered caveats" but were entirely "on side".

Hague's team, although delighted by the unanimity around the Shadow Cabinet table knew there would be noises off.

They did not anticipate how loud, or carefully co-ordinated the explosions would be.

No action could, however, be taken by the Tory Emuphiles until Gordon Brown had spoken. When the

Chancellor came to the Commons despatch box at 3.30 that Monday afternoon it was on behalf of a Government that had learnt painfully over the previous ten days how divisive and destabilising an issue Europe could be.

Contradictory briefings about Labour's attitude to a single currency had knocked the administration badly off balance.

Brown, however, came off the ropes fighting and the combination of a clear commitment to the single currency in principle with a pragmatic pledge not to enter in the lifetime of this Parliament was a double whammy powerful and adroit enough to silence critics from both the pro and anti single currency wings of his party.

In contrast to Brown's assured performance, the normally acute Shadow Chancellor Peter Lilley appeared to misread the mood of the Commons and stuck to a script which concentrated on the spin which preceded Brown's statement instead of tackling head-on the consequences of the Government's declaration.

Sensing that Lilley had

failed to make the most of his moment in the Commons, the Tory High Command tried for a second soundbite at the cherry. A statement was released from Conservative Central Office in Peter Lilley's name that evening. In it, the Shadow Chancellor declared that Gordon Brown had "passed a death sentence on the pound" and pledged to fight to save sterling.

The newspapers had their headlines and the stage was set in the next millennium for the "EMU election".

The press had an appropriately beefy Conservative reaction, but the Conservative Emuphiles had also been given an appropriate pretext for their revolt. Some, most notably the Leominster MP Peter Temple-Morris, had been hoping that the chance of entry to EMU this side of the election would give them a chance to make common cause with the Government. Brown's position made that an impossibility.

Temple-Morris had been granted two audiences with Tony Blair, with a view to defecting to Labour, and it was only when Heseltine, Clarke and resigning shadow minister Ian Taylor persuaded him to remain to press the European case within the Tory party that he decided to stay — for the time being.

Then Ken Clarke struck. The same Tuesday afternoon that Taylor was preparing his resignation, Clarke rang *The Daily Telegraph* to offer an article on EMU. Although presented as a criticism of Brown, the real target was not Labour's leadership but the Tories.

When confronted on the *Today* programme the next morning with the unhappy consequences the article for his leader, Clarke jocularly chided himself for placing the piece with a "Euro-sceptic" paper bound to make mischief with its contents.

His reaction surprised *Telegraph* executives. After the article had been filed early on Tuesday evening Clarke rang the *Telegraph* and asked for the headline to be read to him. When he was told that his piece would appear under the words "Don't be afraid of the Right, Gordon" he pronounced himself entirely satisfied.

It was far from the only private expression of cordiality shown by rebel ring-leaders to opinion-formers on the Right.

A group of Emuphile MPs and activists entertained Lord Saatchi to lunch the Wednesday before Clarke's article appeared. That evening at the patrician supper club Nick's Diner, founded by the left-leaning former Chelsea MP Nick Scott, *Telegraph* editor Charles Moore was invited to break bread. Among the hosts

were Stephen Dorrell, a prominent Clarke backer during the leadership election but thought to have made his peace with Hague.

The Tory Emuphiles were at pains throughout the week to stress their efforts were a concerted campaign. One explained: "We all knew what was happening. We had to make sure that it didn't look like people were shouting off from different corners."

"The point we have to get across is we're doing this together."

And the conduit for the conspirators is a hitherto obscure organisation called Conservative Mainstream. Created by David Hunt in the dying days of the last parliament to fight the looming battle for the Tory soul in Opposition, a number of leftish and pro-European Tory groups shelter under its umbrella.

The most notable are the

Nick's Diner is one, the Tory Reform Group, which organises in the constituencies is another, and the Action Centre for Europe brings in business and grandees.

In the Commons Parliamentary Mainstream, under the Chairmanship of former Agriculture Minister Tony Baldry, has taken over from the old Macehead Group and provides MPs on the Tory Left with a loose organisational framework.

The main footsoldiers, Quentin Davies, Andrew Rowe, and Ray Whitney have all had their cards marked by Hague's supporters. Most of the Mainstream members are considered "old conservatives", but there are one or two younger recruits who tend to be far less driven to dissent.

The most notable are the Ashford MP, Damian Green,

a former financial journalist and the Witney MP Shaun Woodward, a former Tory Communications spokesman.

Whatever their differences, all the Emuphiles have shown their mastery of the media this week. While commentators were entertained, other opportunities were being exploited. The *Today* programme had been pestered Michael Heseltine for an interview all autumn and were delighted, and surprised when he called them — on the Wednesday morning Ken Clarke's article appeared, to inquire if he might possibly accept their kind offer of a radio car. They were only too happy to oblige.

Heseltine did not disappoint. A single currency was, he said, "inevitable and the only question was when Britain was going to join — not if. Whatever the chances of nuclear war on the Continent, it had now broken out among the Conservatives. When one journalist asked why Heseltine had not adopted his more restrained style of the past, he remarked ominously: "Those days are over." Hague's team, however, are determined that the days when Heseltine and Clarke can dictate Tory policy are over. A swift rebuke to the "retired Cabinet ministers" was delivered to ITN and a fierce defence of the leader's position outlined in Friday's papers.

Next week Clarke will address a Conservative Mainstream Conference at the St Stephen's Club in Westminster. Final arrangements for

the conference, which will also hear from the Shadow front bench foreign affairs spokesman, Gary Streeter, were made on Thursday evening in the Abbey Orchard Street offices of Mainstream from which Clarke's leadership campaign was run.

Clarke is expected to renew, and extend, his attack on Hague's single currency stance, but there are signs that the big beasts may have bitten off more than even they can get their fangs into.

One prominent member of Mainstream was at pains this weekend to stress "I back William's line. We have to recognise now is not the time to fall out in this way."

Another Mainstream official, although supportive of Clarke, feared the events of the past week might blunt the overall message from the Tory Left.

And one pro-European new boy, blamed both Right and Left for arguing with a passion entirely out of place now the party was in Opposition. "It's Blair who makes the running now, we can't change anything," he argued.

"Some of these guys should go away and take a Prozac." The Tory party's old guard no longer appears to be marching in step with the majority in the party or the country, whose opinions chime with Hague's position.

"The dinosaurs' roar may be meant as a warning but it sounds to many Tories as though they are crying out because they see their own extinction."



Mavericks upset Tory poll hopes

Pro-Europe fightback may scupper Conservative chances in Winchester, reports Jill Sherman

THE open warfare within the Tory party over Europe looks likely to scupper its chances of winning the Winchester by-election, with a decision by two unofficial candidates to enter the contest.

This week's fightback by the Tory pro-Europeans has prompted Roger Everett, a former Tory candidate, to stand as a Pro-European Conservative on November 20. And today Robin Page, a former Referendum Party candidate, will also announce that he is to stand on the joint ticket of the Referendum and UK Independence Alliance.

The moves, which will provide a new focus for the row over the Tories' policy on a single currency, will split the

Conservative vote in what is already a tight contest. It will also put the official candidate Jerry Malone, who lost his seat at the general election by two votes to the Liberal Democrat candidate Mark Oaten, in an embarrassing position.

Mr Malone, who won a High Court ruling for the Winchester election to be re-run after ballot paper irregularities, is more pro-European than William Hague, but he will be under pressure to be loyal to the Tory leader.

Yesterday Shadow Cabinet mem-

bers rallied round Mr Hague after Michael Heseltine announced that he would lead the pro-European revolt and Peter Temple-Morris, a Euro-enthusiast, decided against defecting to Labour, to fight from inside.

Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, denied that there was a split in the Tory party and said Mr Hague had taken the only line that would defend Britain's national interest.

John Redwood, Shadow Trade and

Industry Secretary, also claimed the Shadow team were united, and accused Labour of coming up with a "fudge which is not going to stick together for many weeks."

Lord Hurd, the former Foreign Secretary, said that Mr Hague's hard-line stance on the single currency could "turn out to be not so much foolish as incredible", and urged him to review it before the next general election.

Mr Everett, who is regarded as a maverick by Tory Central Office, last stood as an official Conservative in the safe Labour seat of Caerphilly in 1974. Yesterday he told *The Times* that he would use the Winchester re-run to campaign for Britain's entry to a single currency this Parliament or the next.

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Legal & General

High performer who will choose her own curtain

Annie Lindsell looks wonderful, her blonde hair sleek, her make-up perfect. Her blue eyes shine, her smile lights up the room. She wears an elegant black crepe two-piece with yellow V-neckline, as becoming as the dalmatian-trimmed suit she wore this week when she scored her famous victory in the High Court.

Her hands lie prettily in her lap. Immobile, helpless, she is dying beautifully at 47.

"It takes three hours to get me ready," she says, "but I will never let my standards slip. It's the one thing that gives me dignity."

Her QC, Anthony Lester, told me that she was the most remarkable person he had ever met: "A brilliant mind, a vibrant personality, hugely attractive, regally flirtatious." If she has a fault, in Lord Lester's view, it is her adherence to new Labour when she is (like him) one of nature's Lib Dems.

Annie loves life. She enjoys good food (seared tuna, fillet steak) fine claret, the opera and films. Last week she saw *La Vie en Rose*. If she lives beyond Christmas, her goal is an ENO performance in February. Not one with a consumptive heroine. I hope? "Well, I've seen *Traviata* and *Bohème* this year."

She was probably the only dry-eyed person in the house, I said, and she laughed her lovely, silent laugh. She is not in the slightest depressed. Pro-lifers send prayers and tracts, thinking she wants courage. But her courage is greater: she insists on a peaceful, dignified end. "When the throat muscles go, and you can't swallow," she explains - her voice is croaky, every breath audibly effortful already - "first you choke on solids. Then you go on to pureed food. But every mealtime holds the terrifying possibility of inhaling one's food." This is when she will say: Enough.

"I don't want to be given baby food, fearful that I might choke. I am going to die anyway. I don't see the point of going through more suffering. When you've only got a short time left, you've got to enjoy it."

So she asked her GP, Simon Holmes, if he would save her from this stage of the disease by administering the painkiller diamorphine, which would shorten her life. He agreed, but wanted legal clarification and assurance that he would not be prosecuted, in view of what has happened - to a doctor in Newcastle upon Tyne. This he was granted this week.

An objection from another doctor - that it amounted to voluntary euthanasia - was withdrawn, and Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division of the High Court, declared that Dr Holmes's action would not be viewed as anything but good medical practice.

Not long ago, Annie was dancing the tango on stage. Motor neurone disease strikes at random with a tingle in the legs. She was 40. Then came the limp, the falls, the

A full life has given Annie Lindsell her determination to fight for the right to die in her own way



Valerie Grove

crutches, the wheelchair. Now she cannot lift a cup or a comb. She was an Essex girl - "we're troublemakers" - youngest of three daughters of a nurse and a businessman, the school madcap, playing pranks, singing Joan Baez songs at CND rallies, running off to Brighton with the Mods. Threatened with expulsion for going busking in her school uniform, she went off to poly to do A levels and took a modern languages degree.

Once, on a cruise, she was hired as a singer by the handleader at the Savoy Hotel, Madeira, but her father put a stop to that. "My father," she says, "had the best of everything for himself: a yacht, an E-type. But we were kept on a shoestring. He thought education a waste of money. If anything made me decide to be an independent woman, it was that."

She decided to see the world as a British Airways stewardess and enjoyed a brilliant work-schedule on Concorde: "I flew for 3½ hours, had three nights off in New York; flew back, had four nights off. They were halcyon days."

Though she has lived with her partner "Hicko" - Ron Hicks, a chemical trader - for 18 years, she never wanted to marry. "There was no way I would ever be like my poor mother, beholden to my father's every sulk. I've always been utterly independent. And here I am" - rueful smile - "the most dependent person that ever was."

At 35, she went to Richmond drama school. "I'd always wanted

to go on the stage. A friend said, 'If you only had five years to live, what would you do?' And ridiculous though I thought his reasoning was, it did sway me."

At the Edinburgh Fringe, she met the saintly Martin Seager, a young composer, and they toured in his satirical cabaret shows. When resting, she dabbled in property: buying and selling flats in Holland Park, which kept the cash flowing in the 1980s boom.

She and Ron bought Burleigh House in Teddington, an Edwardian villa built for the son of R. D. Blackmore, author of *Lorna Doone*: a romantic house with verandah, ornate plasterwork and barnyard hall with grand piano, the perfect setting for musical evenings. While Martin answers the endless telephone calls, fetching coffee and holding the cup to Annie's lips, we sit in the pale, peaceful drawing-room with log fire and french door to garden.

"It's a happy house. I want to die here, with the *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde* at full blast, and Ron and Martin, and my two cats, and champagne. I don't want to go to a hospice. Hospices do a wonderful job, but I don't want to die in a strange place."

When motor neurone disease was diagnosed in January 1992, "I was in full swing, having a wonderful life". She had just set up a management-training company, giving courses on topics such as managing change and positive thinking. Martin, who had been at Cambridge, took her to the University Library where they trawled the medical textbooks.

They travelled in search of a cure to clinics (and cures) in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Switzerland, Casablanca. "Being the archaic, I found much of this very hard to take. But it's amazing what you do when desperate."

Through the Motor Neurone Disease Association, she has witnessed her own fate many times. On her last visit to Barbara, a fellow sufferer strapped into her chair with a neck brace, "I knelt at her side, and she made indecipherable noises." I looked up at her husband and the poor man was clearly at the end of his tether.

"I said, 'I'm sorry Barbara, we can't understand what you're trying to say,' and tears poured down her face. If some people want to go on like that, fine. Provide them with every facility and help. But give people the autonomy to decide for themselves when it becomes intolerable."

"The pro-lifers say pain can be managed, but pain is not the only issue: there is also dignity and quality of life. We had many affidavits from patients' relatives describing the ghastliness of the final months, the dribbling, the muzzling, 'like living in a coffin'." Letters pour in - one addressed to



Annie Lindsell at home: "A brilliant mind, a vibrant personality, hugely attractive, regally flirtatious," says her QC

"Annie Lindsell, Teddington" - from patients and carers, telling harrowing, emotional stories.

Annie has no religion. She believes we must all make the best of our lives. Her one philosophical conclusion is that we reap what we sow. "I think I've always been quite a good person, and I've been blessed with amazing love and care from friends and family, particularly Martin." Martin's career is on hold until Annie dies. He even does her make-up "like painting by numbers".

She said: "I could not wish for more care. But even so, there comes a time when your dignity is so impaired that enough is enough." Her "living will" specifies that she



"When you have got only a short time, then you have got to enjoy it"

refuses invasive treatment: for example, being fed by tube through the stomach when she can no longer swallow. "Many patients choose this, seeing it as their first opportunity to get off the treadmill. The consequence is that they have to go through the choking when

they sign on with a GP, his views on palliative care. "Some are liberal about it, some more cautious." Today she is guest of honour at a symposium, *Hippocrates v. Hippocrits?*, at the Royal Society of Medicine.

She hopes this week was a small step on the road to the eventual legalisation of voluntary euthanasia. "I would much prefer to get the one lethal shot of potassium chloride, as they can in Holland. But that won't happen in my lifetime. But at least her death, quite soon will involve less suffering than she might have had."

Sondheim's *I'm Still Here*, a favourite song, will be sung at the funeral.

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Cautionary tale for teenagers

Bronwen Maddox on the hidden dangers of the land of the lawyers

Who could not identify with Louise Woodward's appalling cry: "I didn't do it, how can they do this to me, I'm only 19?" Then that terrible tableau: her shaking shoulders inside the too-adult beige jacket, her neatly combed hair sliding into her tears, her "star" lawyer Barry Scheck standing frozen. And, adding insult to scarcely believable injury, the lumbering prison officer clutching her by the upper arm to lead her away — as if she had anywhere to run.

I share the view of the defence team that "no one in their right mind", having heard the conflicting medical testimony, could have concluded beyond reasonable doubt that Louise Woodward murdered eight-month-old Matthew Eappen. We will not know until Tuesday whether a motion to have the verdict returned or the charge reduced will be successful.

But the fact that the jury of nine women and three men pronounced Louise guilty of second-degree murder raises disturbing questions. It speaks volumes about transatlantic misunderstanding. It is a lesson about the peculiarly vulnerable position of au pairs. And it is a warning about the real peril which America's egotistic culture presents to anyone, like Louise Woodward, who wants to sample her country's undoubted opportunities.

The defence has already claimed the deluge of hostile media publicity, and attacked the jury for being unable to comprehend the medical details. Many have also remarked that the prosecuting district attorney — in the US, an elected position — may have been playing to anti-British sentiment among Boston voters in pressing for a charge of murder, not manslaughter. I was particularly struck, as I watched the trial, by the subtle ways in which it was threaded with Anglo-American misunderstanding.

Not least, there is Louise's comment that "I popped him the baby on the bed". In Britain, "popped" is a cosy expression, with a not-irrelevant echo in this case of Mary Poppins. In Boston, it has violent connotations: the more usual idiom would be "I oiled him in the face". If oiled change meaning over 100 miles, appearance is even more treacherous. In Britain, her plumpness was usually seen as youthful puppy fat, in the US, as proof of an insensitive nature.

Before the verdict, one woman lawyer, a spectator in the courtroom, told Cable News Network excitedly that on television she looks like a girl, chunky. But in reality, she is no bigger than a peanut. She proceeded, apparently by implication, to her view that the jury must find Louise innocent.

They did not. The jurors did instead with the Eappen parents in their understandable grief, and in their more

questionable conviction that Louise Woodward was to blame. It is, of course, every absent parent's nightmare that "something happens" during the day.

I have a passing interest in such tales. When I was a baby of about Matthew Eappen's age, left briefly in the care of an au pair, I broke my collarbone. I never gave family stories of the incident much thought, until my twenties when I realised that the exact cause of the accident still troubled my mother, as she mused one day that "babies don't just fall down the stairs".

But neither that incident — nor my conscious memories of au pairs — have turned me against them; rather the opposite. I liked our au pairs, who left me with a fondness for Switzerland and for the names Heidi and Greta. Particularly for children old enough to speak, and to give their own version of the day's events, au pairs can offer the ideal of affordable childcare.

The risk may be as much — or more — to the au pair as to the family. Watching Louise Woodward's trial, I am hardly alone in thinking that her youth and lack of training left her peculiarly vulnerable to blame. At the very least, it is a cautionary tale for teenagers who see a stint as an au pair as one of the few legal routes to working in America. In fact, it is a warning to anyone visiting the continent about the risks of falling into a legal swamp.

That America is a litigious society is not news. But that industry is not just the result of a legal system driven by contingency fees and astronomical punitive damages. It springs from the passionate assertion of individual rights which serves America so well in other contexts, from the openness of its democracy to its entrepreneurial genius. When those rights are perceived to be infringed, anger follows quickly, even from the friendliest people.

That instinct can make even casual encounters perilous. New arrivals are told, only half jokingly, to watch out when driving along streets in the poorer parts of town lest people deliberately throw themselves in front of the car, gripped by visions of their future day in court. Americans' reputation for friendliness is well deserved. But when things turn sour, their capacity — indeed genius — for legal obnoxiousness should not be taken lightly.

Parents fearfully watching teenagers set off on foreign travel usually focus on the physical dangers, whether of backpacking in Peru or hitchhiking in Zimbabwe. It is worth remembering, in the wake of Louise Woodward's trial, that America contains hidden dangers, as able to blight someone's life as a Florida gunman. Even if you have an OJ Simpson's lawyer at your side, as she did, it is not a country where it is safe to rely on the comfort of strangers.

NATURE NOTES



* Even a dead cat will bounce up from the ground if dropped from a sufficient height. (Wall Street slang)

Dead Cat Bounce*



Eldorado of the East

Bhutan is an enchanting land, but can it resist the temptations of modernity?

Voltaire's Candide took his troubles to a land called Eldorado. It was built of gold and diamonds, surrounded by high mountains, inaccessible to the world. Its king and people were blessed with every joy. They had no crime or poverty. Maidens of surpassing beauty attended Candide wherever he went. "We have nothing to ask of God," said his host, "since He has given us everything we need." Nobody left that land — except Candide. It was, he said, "so unlike Westphalia".

The Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is also unlike anywhere else. Lost in majestic mountains, it hides behind a red Buddhist cloak. There is only one town, the capital, Thimphu, where a 41-year-old king rules from the lofty monastery-fortress of Tashichoezong. A single tarmacked road crosses a country the size of Switzerland. A permit is required in order to use it. There is very little traffic.

The population is mostly subsistence farmers living under a most austere regime. Traditional dress is compulsory. The slaughter of animals is banned, as are broadcasting and begging. There is one weekly government news-sheet. Tourism is limited to 5,000 permits a year, mostly for trekking. There is one style of architecture, enforced on every house, school, clinic and even the airstrip terminal. The mission statement of the monarch is splendidly Voltairean: "We seek gross national happiness, not gross national product."

My interest in Bhutan, from which I have just returned, is in walling. Sandwiched between India, Nepal and China, the country is three-quarters covered in virgin forest, an ecological purity unequalled in Asia. Mountain ranges are still coated in cedars and pines, soaring above the ubiquitous rhododendron. Valleys that could swallow the Grand Canyon plunge beneath a backdrop of Himalayan snowcaps.

With the overcrowding of Nepal and North India, Bhutan is the last refuge of escapist trekking. The old trails are frequented only by villagers and yak herders. The epic "snowman trek", three weeks beneath the highest unclimbed peaks in the world, is regarded by connoisseurs as the toughest walk on Earth. (My own effort was confined to two weeks between Paro and Punakha, hot by day, freezing by night and not to be

missed by any serious Himalayan walker.)

Yet nobody can visit this country and not ask precisely the questions his host would rather not be asked. Can any modern nation really insulate itself so desperately from outside influence, while struggling to modernise its economy? Bhutan's social infrastructure is that of pre-Reformation Europe. Outside the capital, the only settlements cluster round the gates of massive monastic castles, where monks live off the tithes and taxes of the peasantry. Each family "gives" a son to the monastery, to spend a lifetime chanting and spinning prayer wheels for the souls of the departed.

Not in the poorest parts of Africa or China have I seen such a complete absence of machinery. Rice grown in valley bottoms is cut by hand, flayed and trampled underfoot. There are no mechanised vehicles. Cloth is spun and woven by the wayside. Planks, permitted only from fallen trees, are sawn by hand and carried down mountains on yaks and ponies. The diet is rice, potatoes, chilies and cheese. Even in areas accessible to visitors, sanitation is primitive.

The result is the most picturesque "poverty tourism" I have encountered. The subjective medieval is much abused by travel writers, but for those wishing to glimpse a pre-industrial age, Bhutan is the place. And glimpse is the word. The monasteries have been closed to tourists for a decade, to avoid theft and excessive contact with the monks within. Only in the overseas aid encampment of Thimphu does the 20th century put in a hesitant appearance. Bhutan is not too proud to accept foreign largesse. It also permits the Indian army to help guard its Chinese border.

The trouble with isolation is that it cannot be willed piecemeal. The essence of theocracy is absolutism, not compromise. It is possible to walk through the forests of Bhutan and think oneself in the *Tres Riches*

Heures of the Duc de Berry. (We encountered one of the king's four queens walking through the forest like an enchanted doll under a cloud of parasols.) Yet beneath the national costume peek Nike shoes. In the alleys of Thimphu, Western videos can be hired for private television sets. The tourist tap can be turned off, but aid workers stay, with their inflated salaries and subsidies.

Road repair is work that Bhutanese prefer to leave to Hindu navies from Nepal. These migrants have no civil rights and are periodically expelled. They suffer what apartheid South Africa used to call racial "influx control". A population which, 15 years ago, was declared to be 1.25 million has been massaged by expulsion and redefinition down to some 600,000 "Bhutanese". The expulsions have been vicious, and led to riots in southern districts in 1990.

The king and his advisers are attempting the old gambit. They want economic reform without losing political control or sacrificing national identity. Until the 1960s, this was a wholly primitive state. It is no longer. Bhutan has abundant hydro-electricity. Its children are being educated through high school, their colourful uniforms thrumming the mountain paths each day. There is even a health service.

The king, who rejoices in the name of Jigme Wangchuck, is no fool. He has seen what horrors random deforestation, cheap tourism and migration have wrought on Nepal. He has seen India absorb Sikkim and China absorb neighbouring Tibet. He knows that reform without liberalism has been the downfall of monarchies the world over. He is fortunate in his geographical isolation and comparative wealth. But he has a wary eye on the squatter camps of Nepal, the crowded barrios of Bangladesh and the dissidents' haunts in Assam. This autumn the Assam frontier was sealed for fear of infiltration.

Bhutan is at first sight the sort of

reactionary haven beloved of Home Counties Tories. In this pocket paradise can be found a charming monarch, an unspoiled landscape, well-behaved children, smiling peasants, no beggary or crime, silenced dissent, an aversion to foreigners, a graceful architecture, courtesy and dignity on all sides. The whole country seems to epitomise mankind's civilised occupation of the Earth. Gross national happiness indeed, and to hell with gross national product. Why cannot the world all be like this?

Bhutan may be lucky. In one corner of a mountain pasture I came across an entire carpet of four-leaved clovers. The king may secure his marriage of past and present, at least for a time. The world may rally to preserve in amber the last redoubt of Mahayana Tantric Buddhism, especially when ruled by a monarch who talks (and practises) the most assiduous ecological conservation. But the rest of the world is less able to cauterise the wounds of modernisation. It is afflicted with permeable boundaries and permeable minds. Other countries must accept the migratory poor, as they roam in search of food and security. Other civilisations, however heroic, must confront Western mass culture face to face in open combat, or they will be sabotaged and destroyed.

Bhutan's bid to turn itself into a monastery without walls is exotic. But it is plainly reluctant to show the courage of its convictions. It will not go the whole hog. If I were king of Bhutan, I would cut off the side of safety. I would close all borders, eject all tourists, refuse all interviews, send back UN aid and foreign workers, opt for true self-sufficiency. I would deny completely the temptations of the outside world.

But Bhutan has not chosen this route. Its rulers like the good things of life. They enjoy contact with outsiders. They want a well-schooled population, and a well-fed one. In other words, they wish to take only the good bits of the 20th century with them into the 21st. They want to have the world à la carte.

There is no such world. Voltaire's Eldorado was a satirical fantasy. Candide knew that the only true road led to Westphalia. The same must one day apply to Bhutan. I have been walking through a dream, a beautiful dream.

Simon Jenkins

Life of Brown

HIS attention of the unwelcome kind: Gordon Brown and his naissiance charms are to be the subject of a biography by that excitable riter Nesta Wyn Ellis, author of *John Major*, a gusting accolade to the an she dubbed "rampant" and "the velvet steamroller". "Gordon is so tractive," she purrs. "I know him socially — last time we met, he asked e if I was going to write another ography but I didn't let on that I anted to do him."

The Chancellor featured in El's last opus, *Britain's Top 100 lible Bachelors*, published in 94, which had to be pulped after a el case. "He has become even ore attractive since then," she vures. "Now he's not just warm, powerful too. Just like that vely John Major."

Before Brown's life story, Nesta ans to churn out a manual of ernational bachelors — Prince bert of Monaco, perhaps even uentin Crisp. "Last time I was shed to include things that aren't true. Never again." Hrrum.



Brown and biographer

• NICK Brown, the Chief Whip, has been tidying up after a party at his Downing Street home. A casualty of the booze bash was his favourite antique table — a pretty young female researcher, perching on the table, split it in two. Uh, oh.



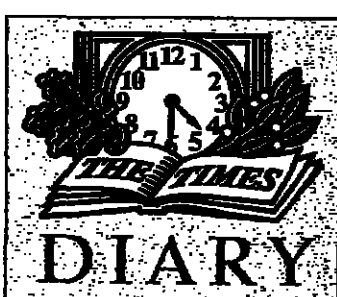
"I don't like the look of the jury"

• The Myth of Princess Diana: the degree course. The intellectual appetites of students at Berlin University are to be satiated with a series of seminars covering key moments in the Princess's life — ballet lessons, dormitory feasts, rows with Raine, you know the story — at the end of which students will be tested in a three-hour examination. "It's a study of her effect on people and the nature of fame," says a voice from the lecture theatre. "We've subtitled it 'Princess of Wales to Queen of Hearts'."

Wigley's glum

PLEASEING these Welsh nationalists is a tricky business. Dafydd Wigley, MP, had grumbled to the House of Commons authorities that he wanted a big office, as befitted a party leader. He declared that upon his return from a three-month sojourn in the valleys, he expected a bigger office.

Greedy requests such as these, he has since learnt, do not wash with the stuffed shirts of Westminster. Arriving back, Wigley found the contents of his old office in the



JASPER GERARD

Norman Shaw Building stuffed into orange cases and shunted into the corridor. The man was homeless. And cross. "It was very inconvenient," he says. "They had three months to sort me out — I call it pretty shoddy."

• ONE of the capital's toughest bruisers was toasted in Mayfair this week. Motley, the cat belonging to the otherwise delightful Susanah Amore, director of Conde Nast, is notorious for filling his claws down the well-polished legs of dinner guests at her riverside house. Funny that in her captivating children's book *Motley the Cat*, the moggy is depicted by society artist Mary Fedden as the gentlest of souls. My shins can testify to the contrary.

Hard cell

THE Liberal Democrats have set up their HQ for the Winchester by-election in a disused women's prison. The bleak-looking nick was

closed in 1849 for being too, well, horrible. They inhabit the "condemned room", last occupied by a Mrs Huntingford before she was burnt at the stake in 1819 for murdering her husband.

• EXCITEMENT rushed through Whitehall this week as every special adviser (important but poor) received a "confidential" letter from the BBC. Could this be that long-awaited job offer? Gloom, when it turned out to be just an invitation to discuss a new news service over soggy croissants with wee Tony Hall, quite the drippiest blob to survive in broadcasting.

Bob dole

A LABOUR MP who campaigned against unemployment has sacked his research assistant. Bob Blizard, whose election address promised "Labour will put 250,000 young people back to work", left a letter on Martha Eastcourt's desk to say that her services were no longer needed, after she had worked for six months without a contract. What a guy.

• NEW TIMES: There are few places where television has not penetrated, and petrol stations were one such haven. No longer. Petrol in Seaside, America, is sold by a man with a small video screen in his car. Customers nips a kerosene programme while refuelling. How sad.



Companions: comedian Izzard; financier Rothschild

PARTY TIME: LOOKING very much at home, the aristocracy of new Labour swept into Spencer House, the ancestral London pad of Diana's family, for a secret "Autumn Reception" courtesy of the Prime Minister on Wednesday. Mick Hucknall, Eddie Izzard and Melvyn Bragg slapped the backs of victorious Labour MPs.

The aim? To "thank our sponsors" for their support (read: money) during the election. And the hiring of Spencer House was one heck of a thank you. The palace costs £10,000 a night. For some MPs it was the first

A proper Charlie in Africa

Simon Barnes on the white man's burden: idiocy

How very refreshing it was to read that Prince Charles had managed to get things ever so slightly wrong in Africa. Getting it ever so slightly wrong in Africa is something English people have been doing for years. I know. I have, on more than one occasion, got it ever so slightly wrong myself.

Prince Charles came to open a new water supply for a village in Swaziland, but decided it best not to drink the stuff himself. Oh dear. I couldn't help being reminded of the time I came up before Chief Kakoma to explain what I had been doing in his territory for the past week.

Kakoma's village is in the North West Province of Zambia, hard by the Zairean border. We knew this very well. Deep in the bush beyond Kakoma, we stopped at a settlement — a few huts dripping in the pouring rain — and asked politely, er, where are we? The answer meant little.

"But are we in Zambia?" The lovely laughter of Africa. "No. You are in Zaire." This was not a good situation. "We must go now," said Aaron Muchindu. "We must find out where we are." "Never mind where we bloody are," said Baron Robert Sternstedt. "Stop if you see a bird."

With leadership of this calibre, it was hardly surprising that we found still more trouble. It came when we got back to Kakoma, after a week of my cooking, pouring rain, a tent that had a vital part missing, a tent that leaked poisonous gas, and no light at all because by an oversight the paraffin can was full of water.

We were stopped by a group of people who were, they said, in charge. Who were we? What were we doing? Had we been to Zaire? Oh no, perish the thought. Spies? Smugglers? Which? Come before Chief Kakoma and explain yourselves.

Chief Kakoma's hut was comfortable; we were not. We sat on foam-filled easy chairs of coffee-coloured plastic, and waited, fretting. Eventually the chief arrived: tall, crisp white shirt, a person of some presence, accustomed to easy authority and irritated that this inexplicable band had been on his patch for a week without troubling to explain itself.

"Well, there was this bird," said the Baron. "Pearson's cisticola. It hasn't been seen in the wild since 1939..." The chief's countenance was stern. We had a Land Rover. Full of binoculars, telescopes, tape recorders, microphones, maps.

"We've been logging species recorded on each map square..." The chief looked at us. Four men in bush clothes: one Zambian, three Europeans. Nice vehicle. A fortune in optical glass. Incomprehensible blather. It bothered him that he could not see at once what kind of no good it was we were up to.

"Show him the bird books," I fished a dozen volumes from the Land Rover. Page after page, after page: birds and birds and birds. A million details of plumage and call. Mind-numbing stuff. And the chief thumbed through every book.

The grave basiliac stare at last became a smile. First of derision; next of contempt; finally of pity. Spies? Dangerous men? No. Chief Kakoma, it was clear, now knew us exactly for what we were. Absolute and complete bloody idiots. Subjects of Prince Charles.

Thus another glorious chapter of the white man in Africa was written. Chief Kakoma shook us each by the hand and wished us a safe journey home. We never did find Pearson's cisticola.



TRIAL AND ORDEAL

The Woodward verdict should be challenged but respected

For the second time in two years, an American court has produced a verdict that has stunned most observers. The outcome in the O. J. Simpson case was viewed as a travesty by, especially, white Americans. The very different conclusion to the trial of Louise Woodward has distressed almost everyone in Britain. It should be noted that Americans too have been shocked by the outcome. There will doubtless be ritual denunciations of the US legal system. It would be wise to pause for reflection before such condemnation.

This has certainly been a disturbing trial and there have been enough contentious aspects for a defence appeal to be credible. The possible political ambitions of the lead prosecutor, Gerard Leane, have been widely noted. The judge, Hillier Zobel, had a manner as eccentric as his surname. His reluctance to release certain medical statements to the jurors appears curious. The jury were denied by Miss Woodward's defence team the option of involuntary manslaughter. The judge had no choice but to impose a tariff of at least 15 years without parole. However, it should be recalled that the defence as well as the prosecution decided to restrict the jury's freedom of manoeuvre. Many in Britain who might now be protesting the severity of this punishment have themselves supported the principle of mandatory minimum sentences.

Most of the comparisons made between this case and the trial of O. J. Simpson are false. The operation of the law in California and Massachusetts is as far apart as their shore lines. The two controversies share in common the television camera, intense outside interest, and a sensational outcome. In all other respects, the two are very different. The Simpson affair was characterised by seven factors: the power of celebrity; the sidelining of scientific evidence in favour of dubious alternatives; the relationship

between wealth and the quality of legal defence; the shameless self-promotion of virtually all the leading lawyers involved; the distorting role of cameras in the court room; the polarised nature of public opinion; and a jury which in four hours dismissed evidence that had been laid out across several months. All seven conspired to turn what had seemed an open-and-shut case into a show trial with the Los Angeles Police Department, not Mr Simpson on the stand.

It was this combination that led many to see the trial as a condemnation of the entire American judicial system. That was harsh, because the defects it revealed were specific to California in general, and Los Angeles in particular. These features did not recur in Miss Woodward's case. Massachusetts law is of an impressive standard. It indeed derives strongly from English common law traditions. The jurors agonised for 27 hours. This was not a kangaroo court in a banana republic. There is a proper process which allows this verdict to be challenged. If Miss Woodward's cause is as compelling as most in Britain believe, then it will receive a full and proper airing.

This has been a heart-breaking ordeal in every dimension. The death of tiny Matthew Eappen was a terrible tragedy. The suffering of his parents has been powerfully displayed. Attempts to shift blame on to them simply for their decision to pursue medical careers and employ an au pair are vindictive and shameful. The quiet determination of Miss Woodward's parents has been moving. The defendant herself belied the impression of a child killer. Her reaction to the verdict will have scarred many souls. All human emotion has been exposed in the court room. The jury, ultimately, were entitled to their evaluation — they heard the whole case for three full weeks — most of their critics did not. This sad affair, though, is certainly not over.

ALL SAINTS

'As dying and behold we live' (2 Corinthians 6.9)

November, traditionally the month of the dead long before Remembrance Sunday brought poppies and the memory of the dead of two world wars, begins for the Christian Church with a Janus-faced commemoration; today is the Feast of All Saints, tomorrow the Commemoration of All Souls. If the first reflects the light of heaven, the second is a reminder of mortality. Both are an expression of the love which remembers and does not forget or blot out the dead. Both recall us to the need to face and prepare for our own dying, and the death of those we love.

All Saints' Day witnesses to the effect of God in human lives. As such it is both challenge and encouragement. It invites us to examine our meaning and our motives, what we were made for, and how we may become that for which we were made. It challenges us to ask the question of human value and the common good.

Kierkegaard summed up the human enterprise as becoming "that man (or woman) that you are after the image of Christ Jesus our Lord". The saints, whether publicly celebrated or known only to those among whom they have lived, are the evidence that such a becoming is possible in the messiness of the world as we know it. Their lives witness to both the reality of God and the transforming character of his grace. The saints are indeed "the Saviour in His people crowned". In celebrating the saints — first the martyrs who gave their lives for Christ, and then countless men and women of prayer and service and Christian vision — the Christian church has celebrated for two millennia what St Paul calls *Christ in you, the hope of glory*. Two deaths have

dominated the public mood this year, that of Diana, Princess of Wales, and that of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Mother Teresa was accorded the status of a saint in her lifetime. Her single-minded work among the destitute and dying of Calcutta was a living expression of her devotion to the God, who in the self-giving of incarnation came down to the lowest part of our need. In the dying of the poor, she found and expressed the reality of a God who emptied himself even into the nothingness of the outcast and untouchable, and into the loneliness of dying that is the end of each and every one of us.

Mother Teresa's death like her life was set in the context and pattern of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At her end she was commended to God in the hope of Easter Sunday. So too was Princess Diana, whose funeral drew the largest number of participants in the history of mankind. It was a funeral where the ancient symbolism of candles, the more recent offerings of teddy-bears and queues for books of condolence, marked a yearning to set a tragic death in the context of a larger story which could give it meaning. Christian funerals in earlier centuries took the journey from the place of death to that of burial as a sacrament of the more mysterious journey beyond death. The procession from London to Althorp, with crowds lining the way, was expressive in the same way.

The shot-silk of All Saints' Day reflects the human ambiguity of us all, setting that within the larger story of the One whom death could not hold, and whose Easter promise is that, where He is, there we, transformed into His likeness, may be also.

PEN V MOUSE

A good hand will still be an intellectual asset in Cyberspace

The handwriting may not be on the wall for handwriting after all. Our Education Correspondent reports the spectacular success of a French infants school that has introduced the *Kent* system of teaching handwriting, *le graphisme*. By this, from the age of 4, the children are taught manual dexterity, finger skills and finally joined-up writing. By the time they are 7, all of them, even the dunces, are writing fluently and legibly. So many professional educationists and actual teachers want to observe this wonder that the school has to organise special viewing days, so as not to disturb its pupils.

A quick and legible hand is no mean accomplishment, especially in 1997. It conveys character, from which graphologists claim to be able to draw conclusions as remarkable as those of palmists. It is the one creative art that most people can aspire to. Individual medieval copyists can be recognised by their hands, and the declining class of writers of fine italic still take the breath away with the beauty of their writing. For the pen is the tongue of the hand — and a fine hand is as eloquent as a beautiful voice.

The death of handwriting has been declared many times before. The typewriter, the telephone, the ballpoint pen, the personal computer and e-mail are said to have superseded the pen. The young find it very hard to write bread-and-butter letters; but then they always did. Children are no longer taught cursive in exercise books with lines ruled to mark the limits for ascenders and descenders. They write ball-and-stick

letters that are more like the print which will form the great majority of their reading.

Handwriting has been a popular art for only a blot in the long copybook of the history of man. For millennia before public education, it was an esoteric skill for which stonemasons and scribes, clerks and scholars were employed. In a large part of the world it still is. But man would lose something of value if the pen were finally to fade away as the sword has. A well-known hand can speak more eloquently than print or recorded message. The letters of such intimate writers as Dorothy Osborne, the Paston family and Queen Victoria travel through time far better in their original hands than in print. In the written word, form says something as well as content.

Familiarity with new technology may in fact teach children to appreciate order in their handwriting. The teachers of Herne infant school are to be congratulated on their French system of teaching to write. But we do not need to adopt the standardised French hand with crossbars on the 7s, Greek e's and little circles instead of dots on the i's. Disorder and individuality are characteristics of British handwriting as well as of the English Common Law and town planning. A French hand is as characteristic of France as grand architectural projects and the Code Napoléon. They smell of another country. So there is no need for a standardised single European script. But being able to make a good fist of things is as humane an art as surfing the Internet, and more personal.

Hard pounding on euro debate

From Mr George Thomas

Sir, For the past 25 years British public opinion has remained remarkably consistent on Europe.

According to all surveys the great majority have always been in favour of a common market if that means a reduction in barriers to trade and have supported co-operation in those areas where co-operation makes sense and does not unduly invade national sovereignty. There has been very little support for interference with our domestic laws and clear opposition to any form of federal state of Europe.

Succeeding British governments have managed only to irritate both the British public and the European federalists. New Labour already looks old hat in this respect but now the damage could be greater.

Monetary union (reports and leading article, October 28; letters, October 21, 23, 27, 29, 30) may be the single most important move towards federal government but it is only one of a plethora of less obvious initiatives. Unless the Government resists being dragged more and more into the maelstrom of EU rules, interference and expenses, we will not only become an uncompetitive internationally as the EU but will find ourselves outside the inevitable protectionist wall that they will need to erect.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE THOMAS,
17 Campden Hill Square, W8,
October 31.

From Dr Gisela Hendriks

Sir, The statement by my colleague Professor A. P. Thirlwall (letter, October 29) that "the time can never be right to join a monetary union" ignores postwar realities both in Europe and in the international economy.

The concept of independent economic policymaking is an illusion and as outdated as that of a nation-state's sovereignty.

The single currency project to be put into operation in just over 15 months' time is a natural spill-over of the single market. Monetary union does not create a state of interdependence; it merely symbolises the depth of integration already present among member states.

Gordon Brown's acceptance of the principle of monetary union, while deferring the time of participation, is deplorable not least because it was made for the sake of short-term interests.

This is no time to dither. The economic destiny of Britain will be bleak only because of the Government's decision to put Britain at the periphery of Europe's economic and political power centre.

Yours faithfully,
GISELA HENDRIKS
(Lecturer in European Studies),
University of Kent at Canterbury,
Rutherford College,
Department of Politics and
International Relations,
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.

From Mr Malcolm Oliver

Sir, Mr Robert Findlay (letter, October 30) is simply wrong to assert that a single currency must have a single government.

Until the UK and Eire joined the EEC, the respective pounds of the two countries were freely exchangeable at parity, without any concession to freedom of government action. Somewhat ironically in the present debate, it was only the pressures brought about by the differing responses of the Irish and British economies to EEC membership that forced the split and the introduction of the punt.

To this day, the Belgian and Luxembourg francs still act as parallel and interchangeable currencies, with no visible effect on arguably three national identities and governmental freedoms. The system is extraordinarily convenient for those who travel to both countries, although perhaps less so for the moneychangers.

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM OLIVER,
26 Green Lane, Purley, Surrey.

From Mr A. A. de C. Hunter

Sir, Why has the new Tory leadership gone so horribly wrong over its policy on EMU? Of course Clarke, Heseltine and Hurd — all men of stature — are right. The Tories badly missed the bus in 1957 and they are today in serious danger of doing the same. EMU is patently coming and we need, in the interests of the nation as a whole, to be at the top table, influencing the way ahead.

Yours truly,
ARCHIE HUNTER,
Southcombe Farmhouse,
Winham, Chard, Somerset,
October 31.

From Mr Gerald James

Sir, When large international firms express their support for EMU, as undoubtedly many will over months and years to come, will we get assurance, that, say, identical General Motors models will sell for exactly the same number of euros in both Antwerp and Bristol, and that identical Marks & Spencer merchandise will cost exactly the same in euros in both Oxford Street and the Rue de Rivoli?

It sounds like a satisfactory quid (or euro) pro quo.

Yours faithfully,
G. JAMES,
3 Langton Court,
Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne,
October 31.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Abbey statues and high cost of faith

From the Reverend Dr A. E. Harvey,
Sub-Dean of Westminster

Sir, The questions raised by your correspondence (October 25) about the statues to be placed on the west front of Westminster Abbey may be answered as follows:

1. Why are no British martyrs among those to be commemorated? The purpose of these statues is to draw attention to the fact that this century has seen far more instances of violent death incurred through faithfulness to Christian beliefs and values than any other in the history of the Church. These ten martyrs are intended to be representative of countless others and were chosen to stand for the victims of the major incidents of persecution and oppression in every continent.

In Europe, the thousands who suffered under Soviet and Nazi rule are represented by three of the martyrs. In these islands we are fortunate to have had no experience of comparable persecutions. There have been, of course, British missionaries and others whose Christian faith has cost them their lives abroad; but we took the view that to be truly representative those chosen should be natives of the countries in which they were martyred.

2. The imputation of anti-Semitism to Maximilian Kolbe has been proved to be unfounded. Any anti-Semitic material that was printed in the many papers and journals for which he was responsible appeared while he was in Japan, beyond his editorial control and was explicitly repudiated by him afterwards.

3. The project of filling the remaining ten niches which, though clearly in-

tended for statues have been empty since they were built in the Middle Ages, has been approved and supervised by a distinguished panel of experts in art, architecture and history.

We believe it will both enhance the west front of the abbey and speak eloquently of the vitality and the cost of Christian faith today.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY HARVEY
Sub-Dean of Westminster,
3 Little Cloister, SW1,
October 29.

From Ms G. E. Francis-Dehqani

Sir, Hazhir Teimourian's concern to preserve Westminster Abbey's architectural history is laudable. However, I believe he misunderstands the nature of Christian buildings.

Christianity has always preserved the past, whilst also allowing for new insights into the understanding of God. Places of worship, like belief itself, can never merely be monuments in stone. Furthermore, every individual church bears witness to the universal multicultural expression of Christian faith.

My own brother, Bahram Dehqani-Taffi, martyred in Iran in 1980, is commemorated in chapels at Canterbury and St Paul's Cathedral and I welcome the abbey's decision to honour ten other modern martyrs from so many nations. They will stand as a reminder of the countless who have remained faithful unto death.

Yours faithfully,
GULI E. FRANCIS-DEHQANI,
8 Deodar Road, SW15,
October 25.

The Holbein skull

From the Director of
the National Gallery

Sir, Your recent report (October 20) and correspondence (October 25) concerning the restoration of the famous distorted skull in Holbein's *The Ambassadors* make it clear that recovering the intentions of a long-dead artist is a complex and tentative business.

However, your readers will not need to rely on differing opinions in print. From November 5 they will be able to visit the gallery's exhibition *Making and Meaning: Holbein's "Ambassadors"*. A key feature of the display is the making of distorted images, and visitors will be able to view other examples in addition to the skull.

Since *The Ambassadors* will be hung at what we believe may have been the original height, visitors will also be able to experience for themselves the ways in which the image of the skull may be resolved, both by standing to the right of the painting and, by viewing it through a glass cylinder.

Yours faithfully,
NEIL MACGREGOR,
Director,
The National Gallery,
Trafalgar Square, WC2,
October 28.

Prayers and pints

From Mr George Edwards

Sir, Your correspondent the Reverend Vaughan Roberts (letter, October 22) also repeats the error of so many well-meaning clergy since the Fifties and Sixties.

Reaching for more understanding of young people through countless out-of-church initiatives, these well-meaning vicars succeed in opening dialogue only to discover that young non-churchgoers are usually sensible, thinking people, who often live by the basic tenets of Christianity but not those of the Churches.

These clerics then try to measure their own success by the number of their new contacts who "... are now regular churchgoers."

This, alas, is still the Churches' obsession. No matter how relevant or appropriate other forums for the expression or affirmation of belief might be, to the Church the only true measure of a person is whether they can be persuaded to go to church.

This is why we should all continue to fundamentally distrust priests on

motorbikes, vicars at discos, and prayers in the pub.

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE EDWARDS,
20 Fairways Drive,
Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

From Mr Christopher J. G. Macy

Sir, I do not know whether it remains the custom, but in the early 1980s a short Harvest Festival service was held every year in the public house in Ludgvan, near Penzance, in Cornwall. At about 6.30pm drinking, not yet intense at that hour, was suspended, hymnbooks borrowed from the church were handed out, and the rector led the customers/congregation in prayer and singing; after which the books were collected again and drinking resumed in an atmosphere of double satisfaction.

There was not the slightest feeling of incongruity.

Yours faithfully,
C. J. G. MACY,
Walnut Cottage, Grosvenor Square,
Wellington, Lincoln,
October 24.

Quick calculation

From Dr Michael Senior

Sir, Yesterday you informed us (page 12) that Bill Gates is "the world's richest person". Today we are told (page 7) that the Sultan of Brunei is "the world's richest man".

I have considered the possible implications that the Sultan of Brunei is not a person, or that Mr Gates is not a man, but have ruled these out and concluded instead that *The Times*, up to the minute as ever, has calculated the overnight effects of yesterday's Wall Street slump.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SENIOR,
Bryn Eisteddfod, Glyn Conwy,
Colwyn Bay, North Wales,
October 28.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Verdicts on the Woodward trial

From Mrs Valerie Twiss

Sir, Each year UK colleges receive promotional material about au pair schemes in the US, to pass on to young students.

Only now, after the Louise Woodward trial (report, later editions, October 31), do I, a senior manager, realise the awesome responsibilities which might be placed on adolescents on these schemes, and the tragic consequences if anything goes wrong.

The promotional material which was sitting on my college desk yesterday went straight into the bin. This will be the home of all subsequent similar material.

Yours faithfully,
VALERIE TWISS,
Kingsdene, Church End,
Drayton Parslow, Buckinghamshire,
October 31.

From Mrs Jette Jost

Sir, As an inexperienced young mother, I remember shaking my baby in exhausted desperation over his refusal to stop crying, and being frightened at my violent emotions.

Child care is lonely. The prevailing attitude was that "these are the best years of your life: enjoy your baby while you can".

Au pairs are a relatively inexpensive and readily available child-care solution. But are we right to ask a teenager to be responsible for a young child?

Yours faithfully,
JETTE JOST,
Waldeck Pyrmontkade 1,
3583 TW Utrecht, The Netherlands.
j.jost@fsw.ruu.nl
October 31.

From Mr Giles Herdman

Sir, The jury in the Louise Woodward trial was instructed to find the accused guilty only if the prosecution had proved their case beyond reasonable doubt. Was the 26 hours they took to deliver their verdict therefore due to unreasonable doubt?

Yours faithfully,
GILES HERDMAN,
149 Cambridge Street, SW1,
October 31.

Hitler and Ypres

From Mr Martin F. Marx Evans

Sir, I wonder how Hitler decided what to put in his painting of Ypres (photograph, October 29). The view is, I think, looking up Rijnsestraat towards the Cloth Hall with the cathedral tower to the left. The only time a German soldier stood here in the First World War, except perhaps as a prisoner, was during the first fortnight of October 1914, when a small German detachment entered the town.

Hitler made a number of paintings of Messines and the clumsy style shown in your reproduction is similar to that of the works shown to me by M. Albert Ghekiere at the museum there. While this work may well be by Hitler, it is certainly not eye-witness evidence of the destruction.

Ypres was defended with outstanding tenacity and courage by the Australian, Belgian, British, French, Indian and New Zealand forces for four years. The town, though smashed by bomb and shell, never fell to the Germans.

I remain, Sir, etc.
MARTIN MARX EVANS
(Author, *Passchendaele and the Battles of Ypres*, Osprey, 1997).
The Wilderness,
Murswell Lane, Silverstone,
Towcester, Northamptonshire,
October 29.

From Mr Edward Reader

Sir, The painting to you reproduce today, attributed to Adolf Hitler and dated 1916, shows the ruined Cloth Hall and cathedral at Ypres as observed from within the town walls.

After the salient was established during the First Battle of Ypres in 1914 the Germans never entered the city. Hitler was indeed present at the first battle but left in 1915 and did not resume his duties on the Ypres front until 1917.

Hitler's paintings, although lacking in imagination and flair, generally show a degree of competency of architectural detail lacking in this picture. In any case, by 1916 the tower of St Martin's Cathedral was more damaged than the picture shows.

There was a time when to own a picture attributed to Adolf Hitler was an honour much sought after.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD READER,
Bridge House,
Whimple, Exeter, Devon.
lector@globalnet.co.uk
October 29.

Musical message

From Mr C. R. Devereux

Sir, Whilst I was visiting Boots the Chemist today in Norwich, the current hit single, *The Drugs Don't Work* by The Verve, was playing over the in-store speaker system.

Were the management trying to tell us something?

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN DEVEREUX,
50 Wellington Road,
Norwich, Norfolk,
October 28.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
October 31: The Queen this morning visited Royal Air Force Halton, Aylesbury, to mark the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Royal Air Force's first operational mission, the raid on the German battleship *Bismarck* in May 1940.

The Queen accompanied by the Duke of York, the Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent, arrived at the station at 10.15. The Queen and the Duke of York were met by the RAF's Chief of Staff, Air Marshal Sir Peter Barrington, and the RAF's Commanding Officer, Group Captain David Walker.

The Queen and the Duke of York were then taken to the RAF's main hangar, where they were met by the RAF's Chief of Staff, Air Marshal Sir Peter Barrington, and the RAF's Commanding Officer, Group Captain David Walker. The Queen and the Duke of York were then taken to the RAF's main hangar, where they were met by the RAF's Chief of Staff, Air Marshal Sir Peter Barrington, and the RAF's Commanding Officer, Group Captain David Walker.

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the Sixth International Award Forum.

October 31: The Duke of York this afternoon attended the Thru Super Sonic Car Team at the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, Farnborough, Hampshire.

October 31: The Prince of Wales, President, Save the Children Fund, accompanied by Captain Timothy Laurence RN, this evening attended the launch of the Children in Cities Appeal on board *HMV Britannia*, Glasgow.

CLARENCE HOUSE
October 31: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother this morning unveiled the Arctic Campaign Memorial Plaque in the Crypt of St Paul's Cathedral.

Miss Jane Walker-O'Connor and Sir Alastair Aird were in attendance.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
October 31: The Prince of Wales this morning attended the Convention of King Leslie III in Masera, Leosha.

His Royal Highness this afternoon arrived in South Africa.

The Prince of Wales later attended a Reception for members of the British community at the Presidential Guest House, Pretoria.

YORK HOUSE
October 31: The Duke of Kent, Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, this morning visited The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys) at Western Barracks, Falkenberg, Germany.

His Royal Highness this afternoon arrived at Royal Air Force Northolt, near Haddenham, Bedfordshire.

Captain Dominic Hampshire was in attendance.

Royal engagements

TODAY:

The Princess Royal as President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, will visit Card Care Centre, 10 Silk Street, Paisley, at 10.30; will visit Paisley University in its centenary year and lay a foundation stone for a new library at High Street, Paisley, at 11.20; will visit Princess Louise Scottish Hospital (Erasme hospital), Bishopscourt, Renfrewshire, at 12.00; and will open a new Royal Sailors' Rest, "Braeholm", 31 East Montrose Street, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire at 4.00.

Later, as President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, she will hold a dinner and reception on board *HMV Britannia*, Glasgow, at 7.40.

TOMORROW:

The Princess Royal, as President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, will launch the North and West Glasgow Carers Centre's Information Pack at Jura's Glasgow Hotel, Great Western Road, at 12.30; will visit the North and West Glasgow Carers Centre, 151 Great Western Road, Glasgow, at 1.35.

Later, as President, she will attend a reception for volunteers, children, young people and supporters on board *HMV Britannia*, Glasgow, at 3.00.

Trinity College of Music

TODAY:

Lord Putnam was guest of honour at Trinity College of Music's Presentation Ceremony held yesterday at St John's Smith Square, London. Honorary Fellowship of the college was conferred upon Lord Taylor of Gosforth (posthumous award), Mr Dennis Scard, Mr Diana Burrell, Dr Marion North and Mr Ian Wilson. Council member Frances Bliss, Deputy Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mr Paul Sturges, Chairman of the Corporation and Board of the college and Mr Gavin Henderson, Principal of the college were among those present.

Baroness Scotland of Aghal

TODAY:

The life barony conferred upon Miss Patricia Scotland, QC, has been gazetted by the name, style and title of Baroness Scotland of Aghal, of Aghal in the County of Oxfordshire.

Baroness Maddock

TODAY:

The life barony conferred upon Mrs Diana Margaret Maddock has been gazetted by the name, style and title of Baroness Maddock, of Christchurch in the County of Dorset.

Dinners

Framework Knitwear Company
Mr Robert Osborne, Master of the Framework Knitwear Company, presided at the annual livery dinner held last night at the Mansion House, Alderman Sir Brian and Lady Jenkins and Sir Francis and Lady McWilliams, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, were the guests of honour. The Master, Mr D.G. Goodenough, Upper Warden, and Mr M.D.P. Turnbull, Under Warden, received the guests. Assistant Mr J. McA. Dean, Sir Brian and Sir Francis, also spoke.

During the evening the Master presented certificates for the company's 1996-97 bursaries to Miss Georgia McKie and Mr John Arbon and the 1996-97 Benson Turner bursary to Miss Tracy Hunt. Among others present were Lord Sanderson of Bowden, Baroness Byrd, the Upper Bailiff of the Western Company, Mr Winterton, the Master of the

Woolmen's Company, the Prime Warden of the Shipwrights' Company, the Master of the School of Fashion and Textiles, Royal College of Art, Mr S. Groves and Mr G. Boardman.

Chambers of Mr James Townsend QC
Chambers held a dinner last night in the Parliament Chamber of the Inner Temple to mark Mr James Townsend QC's fifteen years as Head of Chambers of 1 King's Bench Walk, Temple, London.

United Wards' Club of the City of London
Mrs Christine A. Dyer Simpson, President of the United Wards' Club of the City of London, presided at a founders' day dinner held last night at Skinner's Hall to mark the 120th anniversary of the club.

Mr David Jones, Superintendent of the Corporation of London Parks and Gardens, also spoke.



Ian Hiscock and Susan Baird, who have just announced their engagement, celebrating in Leicester Square

Veterans of the Danish Resistance

TODAY:

A service of dedication of a memorial stone in honour of the support given by the Royal Air Force to the Danish Resistance Movement between 1940 and 1945 took place yesterday at St Clement Danes, Strand.

The Danish Ambassador and Mrs Poulsen, Viscount Slim, Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges, former pilots and veterans of the Danish Resistance Movement were among those present.

Luncheon

TODAY:

City and Guilds, Chairman of Council of the City and Guilds of London Institute, was the host at a luncheon held yesterday at 1 Gilspur Street, ECI, and presented awards of fellowship of the institute (FCGI) to the following: Professor Peter Bauman, Professor John Burland, Professor Roger Falconer, Mrs Pam Liveridge, Mr Vasant Manohar, Professor Alan Wilson. In attendance: Lord Dainton, FRS, Professor Tom Cannon and Professor Tim Clark.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Mr Umberto Agnelli, former deputy chairman, Fiat 65; Alderman Sir Hugh Bidwell, former Lord Mayor of London, 65; Professor Sir Hermann Bondi, FRS, former Master, Churchill College, Cambridge, 78; Admiral Sir John Bush, 83; Miss Victoria de los Angeles, opera singer, 74; Mr Michael Denison, actor, 82; Miss Tazena Firth, designer, 62; Mr Nigel Fox Bassett, former senior partner, Clifford Chance, 68; Lord Harman-Nicholls, 85; Mr D.C. Holman, former senior partner, Coopers & Lybrand, 75; Sir Wynn Hughes-Jones, diplomat, 67; Dr Margaret Huxter, Headmistress, Harrington Ladies College, 48; Mr Andrew Knight, former executive chairman, News International, 58; Dr J. Dickson Mabon, former MP, 72; Mrs Naomi Mitchison, author, 100; Mr Nick Owen, broadcaster, 50; Mr Gary Player, golfer, 62; Mr John Pullin, former rugby player, 55; Mr James Ramsden, former MP, 74; Mr Gerald Ratner, former chief executive, Ratners Group, 48; Mr Nigel Stapleton, co-chairman, Reed Elsevier, 51; Lord Strathgill, 83.

TOMORROW: Lord Ashburton, KG, 69; the Earl of Aylesford, 79; Lady (Maurice) Bathurst, diplomat, 77; Sir David Calcutt, QC, former Master, Magistrate College, Cambridge, 67; Sir Clifford Chetwood, former chairman, George Wimpey, 69; the Right Rev P.H.E. Goodrich, former Bishop of Worcester, 68; Dr Ronald Hedley, former director, Natural History Museum, 69; Mr Paul Johnson, author, 69; Mr Alan Jones, racing driver, 52; Dr David Lea, trade unionist, 60; Dr Jack Leonard, chairman, British Technology Group, 66; Sir Bruce Martin, QC, chairman, NHS Litigation Authority, 59; Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, managing director, NatWest Markets, 58; Sir Peter Newman, former chairman, Commission for Racial Equality, 69; Professor Sir Ronald Oxburgh, FRS, Rector, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, 63; Professor Norman Pye, geographer, 84; Mr Ken Rosewall, tennis player, 63; Lord Roskill, former Lord of Appeal, 80; Mr Robert S. S. Young, also spoke. Lieutenant-General Sir Robert S. S. Young, also spoke. Lieutenant-General Sir Robert S. S. Young, also spoke.

Service dinners

TODAY:

The Naval Club Vice-Admiral Sir Toby Frere presided at a dinner of the Naval Club and the RNVR Officers' Association held last night at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald was the principal guest.

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1987 LSE Low Company		Price p/s	Chg +/-	% Yr	PE
100	1204 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
101	1205 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
102	1206 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
103	1207 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
104	1208 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
105	1209 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
106	1210 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
107	1211 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
108	1212 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
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165	1269 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
166	1270 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
167	1271 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
168	1272 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2
169	1273 Lloyds	149.00		13	12.2

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HOT SEAT 30
Denis Cassidy
in the front line
at Liberty

BUSINESS

SECTION 2 PAGES 51-64

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1 1997

RK

Levitt on \$1m bail as transatlantic row escalates

By JON ASHWORTH

ROGER LEVITT was freed on \$1 million (£600,000) bail yesterday, as the circumstances surrounding his proposed extradition from America threatened to escalate into a full-blown international row.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) was accused of misleading the courts in the US and the UK in its eagerness to secure the former financial adviser's return. It is to face having the legality of its case challenged in the High Court.

Representatives from the Home Office and US Government have been subpoenaed to attend.

Mr Levitt was arrested at his New York office last week at the request of the DTI, which is seeking to prosecute him in the UK for allegedly furnishing a false explanation of documents to DTI inspectors. The DTI opposed bail on the grounds that Mr Levitt was likely to abscond, but saw its case crumble after admitting in the High Court in London on Thursday that he was being unlawfully held. The alleged

offence is not covered by the US-UK extradition treaty.

The DTI pressed for onerous bail conditions, demanding a \$10 million bond, and insisting Mr Levitt be fitted with an electronic tagging device. In the event, he was ordered to lodge \$1 million, secured against his Manhattan apartment and was required to surrender his passport. Lawyers for Mr Levitt said the conditions were tantamount to house arrest, and said: "He might as well have been fitted with a ball and chain." Earlier, a High Court judge

hit out at the DTI for repeatedly changing its tune in seeking Mr Levitt's return. While admitting that he had been wrongfully arrested, it at first suggested that he might be brought back under a special arrangement. Yesterday, it changed tack again, saying extradition was still possible, since the US took "a more liberal view" of the legal issues in question. The legality will be examined in an imminent High Court hearing. John Causser, counsel for Mr Levitt, said: "The DTI is shifting its ground with practically

every minute that passes. Today, they are saying we can ignore the Extradition Act. If that were to happen, the US will never ever send anyone back to this country again." Mr Causser said the case was likely to go to the House of Lords, and possibly Europe. He said: "It provides an opportunity to explore an area of law that has never been investigated before - a challenge to an inward extradition. No matter how bad a villain Mr Levitt might be deemed to be, it does not justify this kind of use of legal machinery."

Earlier, Alun Jones, QC, for Mr Levitt, accused the DTI of saying one thing in London, and another in New York, and called on them to admit their mistake. Claire Montgomery, QC, for the DTI, said Mr Levitt was being held lawfully. The judge, Mr Justice Ognall, replied: "That is not the way I was given to understand it yesterday", adding: "I have been misled."

Mr Levitt is expected to press for substantial damages over his arrest.

Commentary, page 29

Chief goes after five months at Taywood

By ADAM JONES

TAYLOR WOODROW, the housebuilding and construction group, yesterday parted company with John Castle, its chief executive. He had been in the job less than five months and is likely to receive a pay-off of about £405,000.

The company issued a terse statement saying that Mr Castle, the first outside appointment to the post in the company's history, had "resigned by mutual agreement".

It added: "It had become apparent in recent months that there was a fundamental incompatibility between the

board and Mr Castle and, consequently, Mr Castle chose to resign."

Mr Castle was heading a strategy review, described as "evolutionary rather than revolutionary", which was designed to improve the performance of Taylor Woodrow's construction division. The unit's contribution to profits lags far behind housebuilding but Taylor Woodrow has resisted suggestions that it should be sold.

In the first half of 1997, the group made pre-tax profits of £36.2 million, on turnover of £626 million. Construction contributed just £1 million on turnover of £307 million. Housing, by contrast, made pre-tax profits of £16.4 million on £198-million of sales.

A Taylor Woodrow spokesman said that the disagreements had nothing to do with the review or Mr Castle's plans for the construction division.

One source claimed last night that non-executive directors became concerned about the relationship between Mr Castle and other executives two months into the job.

Sir Colin Parsons, executive chairman, will act as chief executive until a successor can be found. He said the company was in "excellent financial health and is anticipating another year of steadily improving results".

One analyst suggested that the company might be obliged to look for an outsider again.

Sir Kit McMahon, a non-executive who becomes deputy chairman to satisfy the Cadbury code after Mr Castle's departure, said: "It recently became clear to the non-executives that John's appointment wasn't working and it was better to solve the problem now rather than later. We realised that he was unable to build the sort of relationship with his fellow directors that a chief executive needs."

Mr Castle, a former managing director of Marley, joined Taylor Woodrow from Textron, the US conglomerate. The Times was unable to contact him for comment last night. He was paid a basic salary of £225,000 and the contracts of directors at Taylor Woodrow indicate that he can expect to receive 1.8 times his salary as compensation.

Taylor Woodrow shares fell from 185p to 184½p. It is likely that the strategy review's conclusions will be delayed until early next year.



President Jiang Zemin of China, second left, and Vice-Premier Qian Qichen, with Richard Grasso, the New York Stock Exchange chairman, left

London recovers after Wall St surge

By GEORGE SIVELL

LONDON shares recovered from a mid-morning fall of almost 40 points to close up on the day after a strong burst on Wall Street and a modest rise in the nervous Hong Kong market. By the close, the FTSE 100 index had risen 40.4 points to reach 4842.3, a modest end to a week of rollercoaster losses and gains caused by jitters over the Hong Kong economy.

In London, the mood re-

mains nervous after a week that saw a net fall of 2.6 per cent on the FTSE 100 index. Analysts were adopting a "wait-and-see" approach to next week. More volatility from the Far East is expected and Latin American markets and now looking wobbly too. Wall Street gained almost 114 points yesterday after New York traders digested the 260.92 rise in the Hang Seng index to 10,623.78 overnight and US economic statistics showing strong growth, the

highest consumer spending for five-and-a-half years but the lowest inflation since 1964. American dealers, however, said that the market was more influenced by the Hong Kong recovery than the US figures. Hong Kong was helped by a statement from the region's monetary authority that reserves rose during October in spite of intervention to maintain the Hong Kong dollar's peg to the US dollar. Red chip shares in Chinese listed companies rose as a result. The

American economy, meanwhile, grew at 3.5 per cent in the third quarter, compared with the 3.3 per cent rate clocked up in the second quarter and the 3.2 per cent that Wall Street had expected prompting one analyst to say: "Personal spending in the US rose by its fastest in more than five-and-a-half years, increasing 5.7 per cent to \$67.7 billion in the third quarter. The gain was the strongest since the first quarter of 1992. Inflation, however, re-

mained under control. The implicit price deflator that measures price changes rose at 1.4 per cent rate, down from 1.8 per cent in the second quarter. It was the slowest increase since a 0.9 per cent gain in the second quarter of 1994.

In early afternoon trading the Dow stood up 31.44 at 7,413.11 after earlier showing a 113.9-point rise at 7,495.62.

HK rebound, page 28
Market report, page 31

Sears at centre of fraud inquiry

By JASON NISSE

SEARS, the troubled retailer, is at the centre of a police investigation into alleged corruption within its property operations.

The group yesterday admitted that Leicester police were investigating potential frauds within Sears Group Properties, unearthed during an internal audit earlier this year.

Sir Bob Reid, Sears chairman, said the group was giving the police all assistance and that the matter related to a single individual within the company. Sears refused to go into any more detail but the investigation is believed to relate to payments made by contractors and developers working for the company.

The property business has been one of the few bright spots for Sears in recent years. In the year ending January 31, it made operating profits of £15.6 million, while the group lost £98.3 million.

Sears admitted this week that it would have to terminate its £344 million contracts which it agreed, only last year, with Andersen Consulting to centralise all its information technology. The termination could mean that over 300 staff transferred to Andersen could return to Sears.

M&G may be put up for sale

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

M&G, the fund manager that is believed to be being stalked by Halifax, may be put on sale next year by its key shareholder.

Although the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust, which owns 33 per cent of M&G, is under a duty to examine all bids, it is understood to be keen to allow Michael McLintock, M&G's new chief executive, 18 months to turn round the business. The clock started ticking in February, which means the trust could be prepared to sell next August.

Halifax, which floated this year and has £3.5 billion of spare cash, is understood to be interested in buying M&G, one of the oldest and best known fund managers. However, the group has suffered from the

poor performance of its unit trusts and the money it manages for pension funds.

One market source said: "A link-up with M&G would be strategically clever, but the charitable trust will take some persuading. Mr McLintock has only been in the job since February and needs time to prove himself. The trust does not want to sell M&G on the cheap, and Halifax is paranoid about overpaying."

Neither M&G nor Halifax would comment yesterday and Mr McLintock was in Birmingham as part of a series of roadshows for institutional investors. Both parties described reports of talks as market speculation.

Tempus, page 31

NatWest 'No' to German bid

RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

NATWEST BANK yesterday snubbed the unsolicited offer by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell (DMG) for its equities business, saying a sale was not in the interests of shareholders.

DMG responded by refusing to lift its undisclosed bid for NatWest Securities, which has been valued by City analysts at £300 million, though DMG's offer is understood to have been far less.

Michael Philipp, head of global equities at DMG, said the German bank was "sticking to its proposal", and denied it had been slow to build up its equities business in London.

Attempts by DMG to poach staff from NatWest Markets in the light of its abortive bid are likely to be frustrated.

NatWest is believed to have insisted on a 12-month no-hire condition to the talks.

Meanwhile, final bids for BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays, will be tabled next week. Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB) is the clear favourite of the two bidders, while Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette (DLJ), the US investment bank, is still mulling over whether to make a formal offer for BZW.

Robin Down, banking analyst with ABN Amro Hoare Govett, said if DLJ did drop out it would be an "absolute disaster" for Barclays because CSFB would be able to dictate the price of the sale. Estimates of BZW's value range from £200 million to £700 million.

A WEEK IN THE CITY

It was a vintage week for names - the famous, the infamous, and the just plain stupid. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and IPC Magazines went up for sale, Guinness and Grand Metropolitan confused their Greek with their Latin, and an old friend, Roger Levitt, surfaced in a New York prison cell. It was just like old times.

BMW emerged as the clear favourite to buy Rolls-Royce, which has been put up for sale by Vickers, the defence group. BMW is developing a new V12 engine for the Crewe luxury car group, but faces steep competition in the deep-pocketed domain of Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, the man with the world's thickest cheque-book. A spokesman said the

Saudi billionaire would be "proud and honoured" to add the luxury marque to his fast-growing collection, which includes stakes in Euro Disney, Citibank, Saks Fifth Avenue and Canary Wharf. Cars aside, there is always IPC, publisher of more than 70 titles, which was put on the market by Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publisher. The titles are expected to fetch £800 million.

Liberty, the department stores group, sought to unseat Denis Cassidy, its chairman. Virgin Trains joined with Railtrack to sink £600 million into the West Coast rail line, as Pilkington, the glass group, announced the loss of 6,000 jobs. City regulators, anxious to distance themselves from the fragment-

ed world of the Financial Services Act (1986), forever remembered as the FSA, unveiled a dynamic new name for the new over-arching City watchdog. It will be known as the Financial Services Authority (FSA). The cost of choosing this awesomely dull name was not disclosed.

This was as nothing next to Guinness and GrandMet, which consummate their £24 billion merger in the new year, shareholders and regulators allowing. The companies announced they were ditching the working name GMG Brands in favour of Diageo, mistaken by some for an Italian footballer, the new English rugby captain, or a small Japanese car. The companies said the name was based loosely on the

Latin for day and the Greek for world, but scholars were unimpressed. The exercise cost £250,000 in fees.

In New York, Roger Levitt, who escaped prison over the collapse of his financial services group, found himself caught in a bizarre game of legal ping-pong. The Department of Trade and Industry, which is seeking his extradition, managed to mislead two judges in two time-zones, despite having the luxury of ten months in which to sort out their case. The affair is as embarrassing to the DTI as it was to the Serious Fraud Office, which in 1993 succeeded in having Mr Levitt plead guilty to misleading financial regulators - and saw him punished with 180

hours' community service. All this aside, it was really quite an uneventful week.

Apart from Monday, which saw the FTSE 100 index close down 129.5 points, shortly before Wall Street collapsed 550 points, triggering two trading suspensions. And Tuesday, in which the FTSE 100 opened down 457.9 - its biggest ever one-day fall - before coming back to close down 85.3. And Wednesday, in which Hong Kong's battered Hang Seng index jumped 18.82 per cent to 10,765.30, regaining some of its lost face. And Thursday, in which markets headed south again. Just another normal week, really.

JON ASHWORTH

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	4842.3	(+40.4)
FTSE All share	2253.87	(+16.55)
Nikkei	16458.34	(+54.00)
Dow Jones	7410.16	(+28.49)
S&P Composite	911.78	(+8.10)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	102 1/2%	(102 1/2%)
Yield	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Libor 6m	11 1/8%	(11 1/8%)

STERLING

New York	1.6795	(1.6690)
London	1.6795	(1.6690)
DM	2.2862	(2.2744)
FF	8.9323	(8.9372)
Sfr	2.3416	(2.3350)
Yen	201.28	(200.48)
S index	102.3	(101.7)

DOLLAR

London	1.7243	(1.7175)
DM	5.7640	(5.7555)
Sfr	1.4008	(1.3972)
Yen	129.52	(129.28)
S index	104.3	(104.3)

Tokyo close Yen 120.30

NORTH SEA OIL

Brack 15-day (Jan)	\$20.30	(\$20.00)
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GOLD

London close	\$312.15	(\$316.95)
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* denotes midday trading price

Our verdict on British Gas

The Corporate Profile feature has run in the business section of The Times each Monday for the past four weeks. The scores allocated to each company so far are as follows:

Shell	79/100
Asda	74/100
BA	61/100
Pearson	59/100

How will British Gas fare on Monday morning?

Under siege

Redland, the building materials company under siege from its French rival, Lafarge, is in talks with the Braas family that could lead to an offer for Redland's controlling interest in RBB, the roofing tiles subsidiary. Page 29

IMF package

Indonesia, which has suffered in the wake of stock market and currency crises sweeping the Far East, placed itself in the hands of the International Monetary Fund. Page 28

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YOUNG OR OLD - THE PAIN'S THE SAME

Reuters gets \$25m subsidy for New York HQ

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

REUTERS, the media group, yesterday announced a plan to build new US head offices in Times Square, New York, after the granting of a controversial \$25 million (£15 million) tax subsidy over the next 20 years.

A total of 4,000 journalists, sales representatives, computer systems experts, and executives will be based in a spot that was the vice capital of America less than ten years ago. The new building will be on the corner of

Seventh Avenue and 42nd Street, a site that used to be littered with pornographic cinemas.

Half of the award will be made available immediately, based on a promise by Reuters to relocate 1,800 employees to the new site rather than set up new head offices outside the city. The remainder of the facility is dependent on Reuters creating a further 2,300 jobs. Reuters said: "We are planning to consolidate the jobs currently in seven different locations in New York City. There is also a

formula for growing the number of jobs at varying rates to qualify for the full amount."

Reuters said: "We are committed to growing our position in the Americas. This is an effort to consolidate our employees, creating efficiencies and cutting costs. It is also an effort to raise our profile in America and an effort to focus our employees on those goals. The whole thing has a symbolic value showing our commitment to the American markets."

The incentive package was unveiled by Rudy Giuliani, the Mayor of New York, as part of his re-election campaign. Reuters is said to have been less than thrilled by the timing and political nature of the announcement.

New Yorkers will vote on Tuesday and Mr Giuliani, who claims credit for cleaning up the 42nd Street area, has been criticised over the Reuters subsidy. Ruth Messinger, the main Democratic candidate, who is trailing in the polls, suggested that the \$25 million should rather be used to

subsidise student tuition fees. She added: "We cannot keep pricing college out of reach of more and more students. In answer to how I intend to pay for the proposal, I would like to direct everyone's attention to Rudy 'Money Bags' Giuliani awarding a \$25 million sales tax exemption to Reuters."

Mr Giuliani has persuaded a number of American companies, including Bear Stearns, the investment bank, to stay in New York City by offering tax exemptions.

Indonesia secures \$30bn IMF assistance

By GEORGE SIVELL

INDONESIA, which has suffered in the wave of stock market and currency crises sweeping the Far East, yesterday placed itself in the hands of the International Monetary Fund after reaching agreement on a broad programme of reform and financial assistance, estimated to be worth about \$30 billion (£17.6 billion).

This surpasses the \$17.2 billion package agreed in August to bail out the struggling Thai economy. The Indonesian package includes fiscal and banking reform, improved budget discipline, reduction of import tariffs and export obstacles, deregulation of agricultural commodities and efforts to rein in inflation.

Analysts made only a muted positive response to the plans but criticised them for lack of detail. UBS Securities said that there was a "mixed reaction and perhaps an element of disappointment that they haven't given more details on banking sector reform".

Mar'ie Muhammad, the Finance Minister, said the Government believed the three-year programme "will be effective in restoring the health of the Indonesian economy". The Indonesian Government hopes for annual economic growth of 7 per cent within three years. It conceded, however, that the economic growth rate would slow over the next two years before returning to growth of around 7 per cent from the fiscal year starting in April 1999.

The Government said: "The fundamental objective of the structural adjustment programme is to increase national efficiency and the competitiveness of the Indonesian economy."

Indonesia announced the approach to the IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank on October 8 after taking a battering on the financial markets.

The Jakarta stock exchange's main index closed down 2.45 points, or 0.49 per cent, at 500.42 with profit-taking setting in after earlier gains. The rupiah ended the day in Jakarta at 3,615 to the dollar after softening from an earlier rally that followed the announcement of the IMF deal.

Bankers said that the IMF was expected to provide around \$10 billion in a standby facility, while the Asian Development Bank was providing \$3.5 billion in assistance.

The American Government is expected to offer around \$3 billion "as a second line of defence". Singapore has already offered US\$5 billion and Malaysia US\$1 billion. Japan and Australia have yet to announce their contributions, but Tokyo is expected to provide between \$4 billion and \$5 billion.

Indonesia has been governed by President Suharto, a 76-year-old retired five-star general, for 32 years. He has tolerated little political dissent but until now has delivered sustained economic development. Despite his achievements, critics complain that the Indonesian economy is dominated by a small group of his family members and close associates.



President Suharto, who has governed Indonesia for 32 years, has, until now, delivered sustained economic development

Shares rebound in Hong Kong

By GEORGE SIVELL

SHARES in Hong Kong rebounded sharply yesterday after the region's monetary authority revealed that foreign currency reserves rose during October in spite of the speculative pressure against the Hong Kong dollar.

The Hang Seng index rose 260.92 points to close at 10,623.78, ending a week at which it started at 11,444.34 and, at one stage, closed as low as 9,059.89.

A reaffirmation by S&P of its long-term foreign and local currency ratings and outlook for Hong Kong also helped share prices yesterday.

Brokers said institutional buying of "red chip" stocks of Chinese companies had helped the rise. Red chips are seen as a safe haven from any further falls that might result from higher interest rates.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's financial leaders reiterated their determination to fight off speculative attacks on the currency. Joseph Yam, chief executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, said: "I have all along felt that there would be speculative activities and the recent rout was quite a serious one."

"But during the ten days there was no crisis concerning the Hong Kong dollar," Mr Yam told the Hong Kong legislature.

Power firms challenge competition changes

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

COMPETITION in household electricity faces a new obstacle after it has emerged that there is legal deadlock over electricity company licences.

Licence changes drafted to implement competition next year have been proposed by Stephen Littlechild, the industry regulator. They include important demands on data exchange between companies and settlement procedures. But concern in the industry that the terms and conditions are not sufficiently defined could trigger rebellion.

One company said: "We cannot agree to the changes as they are. We are being asked to agree to conditions without fully knowing what is being required."

Companies are being asked

to sign the licence changes by November 14, but last-minute wrangles with the regulator could lead to a delay. If there is a serious dispute the timetable for competition — due to start in April — could be unhinged.



Littlechild: wrangles

Electricity companies are obliged to implement competition by law, but they are at liberty to argue over the terms. Some in the industry believe that the licence demands are so loosely worded that agreement would amount to signing a blank cheque.

The licence change demands coincide with supply price control proposals. Agreement on both sets is necessary to smooth the path to domestic competition.

Clouds already hang over competition in electricity supply for households because of technical concerns. Full-scale testing of systems has not yet started and it is feared that the huge operation to deliver choice of power supply to 26 million households will collapse into chaos.

Society woos small savers

By SUSAN EMMETT

NATIONWIDE, the largest building society, is re-opening its doors to small savers this Monday by reducing the amount needed to start an account from £5,000 to £1.

But in an attempt to separate genuine savers from carpetbaggers, all newcomers will have to sign an agreement promising to give any windfall they might receive after a conversion to charity. Existing members are not affected unless they choose to give any windfalls to charity.

Enforcing the message that it is business as usual, Nationwide is making aggressive inroads into the savings market by offering a rate of 6.7 per cent a year on balances of £1 for its postal account. Sainsbury and Tesco, which offer similar postal accounts, pay a rate of 6.5 per cent.

Brian Davis, Nationwide's chief executive, said: "From Monday, Nationwide is back to business as usual. This is great news for savers, but bad news for many of our competitors. The combination of a full range of accounts, excellent rates and great service is a formidable one."

Nationwide successfully defended its mutual status this summer when five carpetbaggers tried to force a flotation by getting elected to the board.

The building society decided to introduce a £5,000 minimum after intense speculation over whether it would convert to a bank.

G15 seeks rules to stabilise markets

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

MALAYSIA has won support for its campaign for new global rules to protect against currency volatility and market turmoil. The issue was raised yesterday at a meeting of Group of 15 (G15) trade and economy ministers in the Malaysian capital, according to Alvaro Garcia, Economy Minister of Chile.

He said that "new regulations could well be defined". The ministers' meeting centred on currency specu-

lation and wild stock market swings, delegates said.

Rafidah Aziz, the Malaysian Trade Minister, opened the meeting with a call for a common stance against the turbulence that has affected most world markets.

In a speech at the opening of the day-long meeting before the G15 summit next week, she noted that the market turmoil had left "developing countries facing depreciation in their currencies".

Young & Rubicam plans \$2bn float

By JASON NISSE

YOUNG & RUBICAM, the US advertising agency, is planning a \$2 billion (£1.3 billion) New York flotation in the new year, raising around \$400 million.

Young & Rubicam's businesses include Burson-Marsteller, the public relations group, and Wunderman Cato Johnson, the direct marketing agency. It is understood that the group, which is headed by Peter Georgescu, its chairman and chief executive, has hired

Bear Stearns and Donaldson Lufkin Jenrette, the Wall Street firms, to underwrite the float.

Young & Rubicam has a strong presence in the UK and last year had income of \$1.3 billion, making it about a third of the size of WPP, the British group that is the world's largest marketing services network.

It is hoped that the float will help it to move up into the top strata of world agencies.

WPP takes £15m stake as Chime doubles size

By JASON NISSE



Bell: remains chairman

MARTIN SORRELL and Sir Tim Bell were reunited yesterday, over a decade after they both left Saatchi & Saatchi, when Mr Sorrell's WPP Group paid £15 million for a 29.9 per cent stake in Sir Tim's public relations operation, Chime Communications.

WPP took the holding as Chime revealed the £24 million purchase of Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury (HHCL), the advertising agency, and the £5 million acquisition of AMD, which specialises in marketing residential property developments. The deals double the size of Chime, increasing its market value to about £65 million.

The acquisition is the third relatively small deal struck by WPP in recent

weeks as it expands its network, which is based on the two global advertising agencies, J Walter Thompson and Ogilvy & Mather, and Hill & Knowlton, the public relations operation.

Rivals have suggested that the Chime deal could present WPP with conflict of interest problems. However, Mr Sorrell yesterday rejected these suggestions. "We have great experience with dealing with possible conflicts within JWT and Ogilvy," he said.

The new structure of Chime indicates how much influence the HHCL people will have on the management of the expanded group. Though Sir Tim remains as chairman, Rupert Howell, HHCL's chairman, will become joint

chief executive of Chime, and Robin Price, HHCL's finance director, will also join the board.

Piers Pottinger, Chime's other joint chief executive, said yesterday that he would run the public relations side and Mr Howell would be in charge of the advertising operation. "All of us will be looking at other areas of corporate development," he said. "A lot of people thought we were too small and just a PR company. I hope they are happier now."

With the acquisition, Chime issued figures for the six months to June 30. Pre-tax profits grew from £1.41 million to £1.7 million, earnings were up from 1.6p to 1.9p and the dividend, payable on November 20, is to be 0.65p (0.55p).



Sorrell: denies conflicts

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Jefferson Smurfit expands in Mexico

JEFFERSON SMURFIT, the paper and packaging group, is to invest \$120 million (£72 million) in a Mexican project. Smurfit's Mexican subsidiary, Smurfit Carton y Papel de Mexico, plans to invest the money in an expansion of its corrugated, folding carton and mill facilities over the next two-and-a-half years. The company said: "The group believes that this is an opportune time to invest in Mexico as the country is reaping the benefits of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the market is growing very strongly." Smurfit added that this expansion would be funded from the group's existing resources.

Michael Smurfit, chairman and chief executive officer of the group, said: "I foresee continued growth in demand for our products in Mexico, and a need to become more cost effective in both our mill system and converting operations. When completed this investment programme will allow the company to produce superior-quality recycled liner and medium that are without parallel in Latin America and deliver a significant cost advantage against American and other imports."

Kellogg income up 30%

KELLOGG said net income jumped 30 per cent in the third quarter as global sales volume rose 11 per cent. The largest US breakfast cereal maker said earnings rose to \$207.2 million (£122 million) or 50 cents a share in the quarter, including charges of \$6.6 million or 2 cents a share, from \$159.5 million or 38 cents a share, which included charges of \$21.3 million, a year earlier. Excluding charges, Kellogg's third-quarter results of 52 cents a share beat analysts' average forecasts of 49 cents. Sales rose 7 per cent to \$1.80 billion from \$1.68 billion.

Chinese seek partner

THE Chinese side of an ailing car venture with Peugeot, the French car company, will choose a new partner from among Japan's Honda Motor, Germany's Opel and South Korea's Hyundai Motor Co. state media and officials said. Honda and Opel, a unit of General Motors, were the most likely candidates to take over Peugeot's role in Guangzhou Peugeot Automobile, according to Chinese sources. Guangzhou Auto wants a new partner for the 30 per cent stake of PSA Peugeot Citroen, which stopped production several months ago.

Hugo Boss cuts a dash

HUGO BOSS, the upmarket German clothing group, is heading for a 20 per cent rise in earnings this year after its sales rose 15 per cent to DM944 million in the first nine months. Overall, 1997 sales would rise some 13 per cent, Boss said. After-tax earnings at the nine-month stage rose about 20 per cent and would hold that growth rate at the year end, it added. The company gave a comparative figure of 65 million marks for 1996 profit. BNP, the brokers, said: "Boss again showed an even better development after nine months than expected."

TOG profits warning

SHARES in Total Office Group, the office furniture and equipment company, fell from 126½p to 82½p after a warning that pre-tax profits for the year ending November 30, 1997, were likely to be £1 million below the £3.23 million reported last year. TOG attributed the expected fall in profit to low levels of orders. Overall margins this year have been down because of increased competition. However, the current number of orders are up on last year and the final dividend this year is forecast to meet market expectations of 3.4p.

Memory opts for Asia

MEMORY CORPORATION is to stop British subcontract manufacturing in a move that will cost £500,000. In future Memory will source modules from low cost manufacturers in Asia. The shares rose 5p to 45p. The company said it took the decision in keeping with its strategy of focusing on licensing rather than manufacturing. Memory also said it has signed its first licence agreement for Microlock, its proprietary security chip design, with Hsin-lin Computer, the Taiwan company.

Shopping centre sold

TBI, the property and airports group, yesterday sold the Overgate Shopping Centre in Dundee to Lendlease for £39.4 million. The group will retain a small number of shares in Overgate. Built in 1968, Overgate was part of the Molyneux Estates portfolio of properties acquired by TBI in 1995. Plans to transform Overgate into one of Scotland's leading shopping centres included redevelopment of the site requiring significant additional capital investment. Debenhams was also secured as the anchor tenant.

Orbis acquisitions

ORBIS, the security services group, has made two acquisitions for up to £4.64 million funded out of new term loan facilities provided by HSBC. Orbis has paid up to £2.4 million to acquire the British and Irish integrated security systems division of Westinghouse Electric. Orbis has also paid up to £2.075 million for Bar-it, which protects vacant local authority property using steel doors and screens that are rented to customers. HSBC is providing a new term loan and other facilities of £14.4 million.

Avalon Oil slides

AVALON OIL suffered an overall loss for the six months to June 30 of \$2.4 million (£1.44 million), worse than the previous \$1.2 million loss. Losses per share reached 3 cents. No comparative figure was available. John Wiczorek, Avalon Oil chairman, said that oil production at Stimul, the 49 per cent owned joint venture company with Orenburggazprom, a subsidiary of Gazprom, the Russian oil company, is about 2,500 barrels per day. Production levels are expected to increase to 10,000 a day. A daily production of 23,000 is hoped for by the end of 1998.

Bank		Bank	
Buyer		Seller	
Australia \$	2.48	2.30	
Austria Sch	21.24	19.88	
Belgium Fr	62.81	67.85	
Canada \$	2.470	2.291	
Cyprus Cyp	0.894	0.828	
Denmark Kr	11.98	10.70	
Finland Mk	9.22	8.47	
France Fr	10.15	9.22	
Germany Dm	3.05	2.81	
Greece Dr	4.81	4.81	
Hong Kong \$	13.70	12.58	
Ireland Pt	1.28	1.08	
Italy Lit	1.17	1.08	
Japan Yen	6.23	5.58	
South Korea W	3011	2774	
Spain Ptas	216.23	198.70	
Sweden Kr	0.678	0.677	
Switzerland Sfr	3.450	3.185	
Taiwan Ntd	2.83	2.80	
Thailand Ba	12.32	11.58	
UK £	307.53	285.50	
USA \$	6.78	7.80	
Yugoslavia D	226.25	210.00	
Denmark Kr	13.35	12.58	
Belgium Fr	2.50	2.50	
Turkey Lira	312.92	280.54	
USA \$	1.779	1.686	

THE SUNDAY TIMES

When the chips are down...

Whether the American market will hold up or collapse and lead the rest of the world into a crash (as happened in 1987), depends to a large extent on what investors decide to do in two strategic areas — American technology stocks and Brazil.

Business, The Sunday Times tomorrow

Riches to rags



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Those of a kindly disposition might slip into a Laura Ashley shop this weekend and try and help the business keep ticking over by buying one of the many reduced items hanging sadly on the racks. The company is, as the saying goes, in continuing discussions with its bankers, and any evidence of customer interest in the brand might help to persuade the consortium of lenders to keep faith. Having admitted that it will incur a loss for the year, the company will be in breach of its covenants at the stage that it rules off its accounts in January, even if it is not now.

The banks, led by the estimable Bank of Nova Scotia, are apparently content, at the moment, to continue providing a £50 million facility, no doubt in the expectation that the lead up to Christmas should mean that even Laura Ashley collects some festive cash flow. But there are increasing fears as to what the New Year may bring for the beleaguered business and how tolerant the bankers may be at that stage.

David Hoare, the consultant who was parachuted in a couple of months ago to try and bring some order into the chaos that was revolving around the heavily remunerated chief executive, Ann Iverson, apparently sees the conservation of cash as his main priority. But the problems at Laura Ashley go far beyond the financial.

Last week saw the formal departure of Patricia Manning, the marketing director who had been brought in by Ms Iverson, the last of her bevy of female recruits to make a rapid exit. Industry watchers say that potentially far more damaging to the company is the disenchantment and gradual fallout of the raft of managers who had remained loyal to the Laura Ashley ideal for so long.

Ms Iverson, who recently posed fetchingly for Vogue magazine clad in leather, has apparently finally put paid to the image that the late Laura Ashley had created. Instead, she determined to reshape the business, charging into huge new stores in the United States that are now looking like expensive liabilities.

Sir Bernard Ashley, who originally championed Ms Iverson's promotion, is now thought to be resentful of her contractual rights to a salary of close to £1 million, particularly as her role appears to be virtually side-lined after the arrival of Mr Hoare.

When the tough Goldman Sachs banker John Thornton took over as chairman, the market assumed that he must know more about exciting prospects for the company than was

apparent to outsiders who merely saw a brand that had lost its way. But the clever corporate deals have not materialised. Sir Bernard had intimated he might be interested in selling his stake at £2 a share, but with the price now down to 46p, he feels understandably aggrieved. If he listened to the more bearish analysts, he might be inclined to sell his family holding of more than 35 per cent rather than wait to see what 1998 may bring.

Fortunes turn in a tale of two banks

This is a tale of two banks and how their fortunes can see-saw so rapidly. During the summer, it was National Westminster that was in the dog house after publicly unearthing a black hole in its derivatives business and failing to persuade investors that it had a coherent strategy. But this weekend,

Buggins's turn as whipping boy of the banking world seems to have landed with Barclays. Martin Taylor, so recently revered as the bright white hope of the sector, must be feeling just a touch uncomfortable as he contemplates his predicament. If, as seems likely, he is down to just a single potential buyer for BZW, his negotiating position is, to say the least, constrained. Credit Suisse First Boston may be keen to build up its investment banking business in the UK but the price it has in mind will have been ebbing away along with the competitive bidders.

Suggestions that BZW may not have fared as well as some during the market high jinks of recent days may also have affected CSFB's thinking.

But Mr Taylor and his colleagues in the Barclays boardroom have publicly committed themselves to selling the bulk of BZW, and in demonstration of their serious intent, parted with

the top man, Bill Harrison. Having destabilised the staff this way, they now need to do a deal quickly, with price perhaps a secondary consideration.

So there were a few smug smirks around NatWest's HQ yesterday as Deutsche Morgan Grenfell's efforts to buy the bank's equities business were firmly rebuffed. The offer was apparently derisory but, never having said the business was for sale, NatWest felt under no pressure to do the deal.

This is not to say that equities will remain for ever under the NatWest roof but that the bank is evolving a strategy that does not involve the complete dismantling of NatWest Markets.

US and Hambro Magan in the UK.

It may not be completely reassuring for the chaps in equities to know that they are part of the plan, at least until a good offer comes along, but that is the position and, by comparison with the Barclays situation, it does not seem entirely unreasonable.

Accountants must remain divided

Having seen their major rivals pairing off, there was a certain inevitability about Deloitte & Touche and Andersen Worldwide exploring the possibility of a get-together.

But can these firms, which so expensively sell their advice to companies considering a merger, seriously believe that the competition authorities would wave through a reduction from the Big Six accountancy firms to the Big Three? In Europe, competition commissioner Karel van Miert is already looking warily at the proposed link up of Ernst & Young with KPMG, and Coopers & Lybrand with Price Waterhouse. The Office of Fair Trading is making submissions

to the Commission on whether these deals are anti-competitive, and it is difficult to see how the conclusion can be anything other than in the affirmative.

Suggestions that the OFT would be pacified by the merged firms agreeing to shed a quota of audit clients from the FTSE are clearly ludicrous. Assuming that the customers have chosen their auditor for the international expertise on offer, where else would they take their business except to one of the other members of the triumvirate? There would be a reflow of clients but little effect on competition.

Already the six exercise enormous influence on the corporate sector through providing consultancy services as well as bread-and-butter audit work. The competition authorities should firmly rule out any further limits on the choice available to clients.

A game of tag

The absurd request from the Department of Trade and Industry that Roger Levitt be fitted with an electronic tracking device makes one wonder what else they have up their sleeve? Or are they going to admit that this is their only hope of keeping up with sharp financial practitioners, in the absence of rules that have any chance of sticking? Perhaps they could pass a tip on to Howard Davies at the newly christened FSA.

Redland defence hangs on talks with Braas family

By CARL MORTIMER

REDLAND, the building materials company under siege from its French rival, Lafarge, is in talks with the Braas family of Germany, which could lead to an offer for Redland's controlling interest in RBB, its roofing tiles subsidiary.

He also revealed that the

Braas family, which controls the minority 43 per cent of the European roofing tiles business, could be the key to Redland's defence. He said the talks "include discussions in relation to Redland's 56.5 per cent interest in RBB with Mrs H. Bruhn-Braas".

Redland's shares rose 9p to 340p yesterday in the hope that the talks would flush out a rival bid or break-up. However, Lafarge poured cold water on yesterday's document. Bertrand Collomb, chairman of Lafarge, said: "A break-up is complicated and there are tax consequences. At some point, Redland shareholders will have to choose between cash on the table and a break-up proposal which is more or less precise."

The Redland defence document reiterates the board's claim that Lafarge's £1.7 billion offer undervalues the company, pointing to the size of its aggregates interests in the UK, France and North America as well as its leading position in roof tiles. However, the document notably omits any reference to values or financial performance, the focus of Lafarge's attack.

Mr Agnew said that the company is considering a range of options in extracting more value from the company. "There will be no sacred cows," he said. "I believe my house is worth a great deal of money, but there is only one way of finding out."

Analysts believe that the break-up of Redland could be problematic and lead to tax problems because it has owned many of its assets, in particular the UK quarries for a long time.

The Braas family is believed to have hired Lehman Bros, the US investment bank, to advise it in its discussions with Redland. RBB is the jewel in Redland's crown but the UK group has been stymied in its attempts to extract value from the business because of the ownership structure.

Redland recently secured greater rights over the dividends from Braas, injecting more of its own assets into the roof tiles business in exchange for a larger percentage of an enlarged business. However, a change of control of RBB would lead to a reduced dividend from the new owner, Lafarge has said it can live with the lower dividend, but the City believes it reduces the number of prospective buyers for RBB.

Tempos, page 31



Good enough: Alan Goodenough, the chief executive of London Clubs International, announced that Planet Hollywood is to build its first music themed hotel and casino as part of the redevelopment of the Aladdin Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. London Clubs is investing \$50 million (£30 million) in a 25 per cent stake in Aladdin Gaming

Liberty family member wins his unfair dismissal case

By FRASER NELSON

THE last member of the Liberty family to work with the retailer, Richard Stewart-Liberty, has defeated the company in an industrial tribunal which ruled he was unfairly dismissed two years ago.

Mr Stewart-Liberty, who with the rest of his family is leading a campaign to oust Denis Cassidy as chairman, is expected to be awarded up to £35,000 compensation at a hearing on March 19.

The tribunal ruled that he had acted in good faith by sending a letter to Mr Cassidy, the Japanese retailing giant, warning them that Liberty's management was turning against the idea of expanding the joint venture they had set up from its existing three shops.

Liberty, which described his action as "a calculated attempt to subvert the authority of the board", must now pay compensation. The maximum limit set for tribunals is only £35,000.

Mr Stewart-Liberty is now entitled to take action against the company to claim for more money, which he would have been due as a severance package. However, his spokesman said this is unlikely because his primary objective was to clear his name, not secure compensation.

He argued that, as chairman of the joint venture, he owed loyalty to both Mr Cassidy and Liberty and felt compelled to advise them when he heard that Mr Cassidy had described the venture as "a dog".

The ruling will come as a blow for Mr Cassidy, who will soon face calls for his dismissal from an extraordinary meeting called by the Liberty family. The rebels speak for 44 per cent of the shares and need only a

minor sway of votes to secure victory.

Neither Richard Stewart-Liberty nor any of his family have intentions to return to the retailer. Instead, they propose that Odile Griffith, their financial adviser, and of Brian Myerson, a long-standing business associate, are elected to the board.

The unfair dismissal action is being conducted separately to the move to oust Mr Cassidy, and was started two years ago. In it, Mr Stewart-Liberty described the current board as "a weak institution", and said that Mr Cassidy had resolved to dismiss him long before the letter was sent.

Boards roughed-up, page 30

Andersen and Deloitte deny merger reports

By JON ASHWORTH

THE last of the "independent" Big Six accountancy firms, Arthur Andersen and Deloitte & Touche, yesterday denied they had entered into informal discussions that could lead to a merger (See Commentary this page).

In hard-hitting statements issued on both sides of the Atlantic, the firms said they had no interest in joining forces, completing the move from Big Six to Big Three.

Speculation about their intentions has been rife since the other leading accountancy firms — Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand, and KPMG and Ernst & Young — announced their intentions to merge.

The logic was that Arthur Andersen and Deloitte & Touche would be forced into a defensive link or risk losing their competitive edge.

Judi Wadia, Arthur Andersen Worldwide managing partner, said: "The rumour that Arthur Andersen and Deloitte & Touche have had or are having merger discussions is totally false. We are not interested in entering into any global merger dis-

cussions." John Roques, senior partner of Deloitte & Touche in the UK, reiterated a statement made by J. Michael Cook, chairman and chief executive officer of Deloitte & Touche in America, saying: "The board of Deloitte & Touche have decided not to merge with anyone, including Arthur Andersen."

The impending mergers face significant regulatory challenges, and there is a view that the firms would be forced to divest significant numbers of clients and resources.

Firms such as Arthur Andersen would be able to cherry-pick clients and teams without the expense of a full-blown merger.

There is also no guarantee that practices in a particular country would be willing to merge — as happened in the UK in 1989 when Deloitte Haskins & Sells voted to merge with Coopers & Lybrand rather than Touche Ross. This would provide Andersen and Deloitte & Touche with further scope to grow their practices.

Lloyd serves up Snakeboard rescue

By FRASER NELSON

DAVID LLOYD, the former professional tennis player, will this month announce a rescue package for Snakeboard International in a last-ditch attempt to save the steerable skateboard producer from insolvency.

Mr Lloyd, who was originally a non-executive director of the company, has now taken over the company, given it £200,000 from his own personal fortune as a convertible

loan to salvage the prospects of its steerable skateboards. Later this month he will announce that Snakeboard will scrap its original plan of owning and producing the boards. Instead, it will license it out to other producers and accept a cut in any resulting profits.

The shake-up comes after the company announced a loss of £423,000 for the three months to June 30, after its sales collapsed to £166,000 (£496,000). It has

also severed the contract with its main European distributor. It raised £3 million when it joined the Alternative Investment Market last year, introduced by Neill Clerk Capital. It spent the money on a high-profile advertising campaign in the US and switched to a new skateboard model, ditching the old version. A fault was found in the original moulds, and the company had no skateboards to sell after exhausting the marketing budget.

Mr Lloyd said that he has spent the last two months working on a plan to salvage the firm. The production problems have now been overcome and the company is in the closing stages of signing deals with its potential producers and distributors.

Its shares, which joined the Alternative Investment Market at 4.5p, now stand at 0.75p, making the company one of the worst-performing stocks listed on the London stock market.

Ministers postpone talks on coal

By OUR INDUSTRIAL STAFF

UNION officials yesterday expressed "deep disappointment" at the cancellation of a planned meeting with ministers to seek help for the beleaguered coal industry.

The colliery management union was due to lead industry representatives and MPs to argue the case for coal with John Batten, the Energy Minister, and Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, on Monday. The meeting was called off because Mr Meacher is in Washington next week.

Pat Carragher, general secretary of the British Association of Colliery Management, said: "We will press for a further meeting and if one is not forthcoming, I will be forced to conclude that the Government simply does not want to listen."

The meeting was planned amid fears that between four and eight pits could close because of the continued "dash for gas" in preference to coal-fired power stations.

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...FROM LONDON CITY AIRPORT

The chairman accused of taking Liberty's

Shopping for chic in the quiet of Liberty's bizarre life rooms, few could imagine that blood is flowing thick on the neo Tudor walls behind. Once again the Stewart-Liberty family is at war and this time they have stuck the knives deep into the man who was hailed as their saviour, Denis Cassidy, the chairman.

Luckily the Gordie-born Cassidy is a bruiser and well versed in the art of corporate warfare after 40 years in business. But even Cassidy, blooded at BHS and The Boddington Group will need every scrap of nous because his new foes are seriously angry.

In a classic twist, the family, with 27 per cent of the shares, have climbed into bed with a former arch-enemy, Brian Myerson, the South African raider, who has 17 per cent. They want Cassidy out and will hold an annual meeting next month to put it to the vote.

Myerson and the family adviser, Odile Griffith, formerly of Hambro Magan, also want to become directors. Cassidy has the full support of the board. Cassidy's apparent crime is that he does not tell them what he is up to, that profits have not been revived fast enough and that the share

price is still falling. Behind much of this criticism is the bitterness of Richard Stewart-Liberty, stepson of the shop's matriarch Elizabeth Stewart-Liberty whom Cassidy sacked. He claimed unfair dismissal at an industrial tribunal and won.

Cassidy is used to difficult characters in difficult situations. He knew that Liberty would be tough to crack and turned down the original offer. Only after he met members of the family and warned them that strong medicine would have to be swallowed did they persuade him to join.

Until now both big investors have been on-side. Last year he began restructuring the business and bravely cut the dividend, a move which cost Elizabeth her £20,000 annual income. Moves to license the famous Liberty print to third-party manufacturers and close the wholesaling division incensed the family who feared that the Liberty brand was being weakened.

Others in the business have accepted that Cassidy's medicine was essential. There have also been rumours of discontent over his £40 million refurbishment plans which will release half as much new retailing space from

IN THE HOT SEAT

CV: DENIS CASSIDY
Born Tyneside, 1933.
1969-87: British Home Stores
1988-92: BAA, non-executive
1988-94: Kingsbury, chairman
1989-95: Boddington, chairman
1994-96: Seaboard, non-executive
Currently chairman of Liberty, Ferguson and Oliver Group, and non-executive at Compass and Newcastle United.

old offices. The plans include such modern accessories as escalators. The family are said to be worried that this will spoil their beloved image.

Cassidy has never been in thrall to Liberty's history. He has said: "Its

heritage has also been its constraint. When Arthur Liberty created Liberty in 1875, he created something exotic and exciting. We must get that back."

A rather gruff but industrious man, Cassidy, 64, is one of eight children of a Tyneside bus conductor. He has made a mean reputation for himself as a corporate doctor cum retail fixer. Colleagues say he has that useful knack of telling bad news but leaving people feeling it was good for them. Until now, the big job and love of Cassidy's life was BHS. He worked his way up to chairman only to merge with Sir Terence Conran's Habitat empire in the 1980s when Conran's retailing flair was still held in awe.

The two men are chalk and cheese and it is no surprise that they fell out. Conran took the top slot but the merger was a disaster with the two disagreeing over the shops. Conran wanted his style reproduced everywhere. History will probably show that the customers were with Cassidy. He walked with a heavy heart, deciding to take a number of roles rather than a single executive job. He became chairman of Boddington, the family-run brewery, and Ferguson

International, and a director of BAA. At Boddington the founding family was horrified by his plan to close the brewery that had been in their hands for 210 years. In the end, he said: "Boddington's shareholders were singing and dancing in the streets."

Cassidy claims the Kingsbury Furniture Group, which had gearing of 300 per cent, was another successful turnaround, although he left before the flotation. The shares subsequently collapsed and it was rescued by Lord Harris of Peckham's H&C Group. But his track record at the Oliver shoe chain and Ferguson International is more doubtful. Oliver's share price is twice what it was when he went in, but has fallen again recently, while Ferguson's results are still miserable.

For the moment the jury is out on whether his medicine is working. Other than shops, his great love is sport - cricket and his home team of Newcastle United. He plans to play this latest Liberty saga with the straightness of bats and from what one hears is looking forward to pulling out the knives in his back.

MARGARETA PAGANO Denis Cassidy knew that the Liberty job would be tough



Active duo rough up boards but are not always able to add value



Brian Myerson has been criticised for being too quick to call extraordinary meetings

If making money was as easy as generating press coverage, Brian Myerson and Julian Treger would be rich men indeed. Over the past five years, the two South Africans have made their reputation by roughing up a series of small public companies. On the fringes of the City, they and their UK Active Value Fund enjoy a higher profile than institutions with many times their size and financial firepower.

Although Mr Myerson and Mr Treger are joined at the hip in the minds of most City folk (they even have the same birthday), they sometimes work separately. And though UK Active Value Fund is their best-known vehicle, they also use others.

This is the case with Mr Myerson's attack on Liberty, the upmarket West End store in which his Concerto Capital Corporation has a 17 per cent stake. He has joined with family shareholders, headed by Elizabeth Stewart-Liberty, in a bid to unseat Denis Cassidy, the chairman, who is trying to put an end to Liberty's dismal performance. This is the second

Paul Durman checks the record of two high-profile investors

time that Mr Myerson has gone to war with Liberty. Ironically, Richard Stewart-Liberty was previously the enemy in a battle over voting rights for the company's non-family shareholders. Liberty is a classic Myers/Treger target: small and troubled but relatively high profile. Previous victims have included Signet, the jewellery group that was Ratners, Kenwood, the kitchen appliances company, and Greycoat, the owner of a couple of London landmark buildings. To generate further interest, Mr Myerson and Mr Treger (in particular) can usually be relied on to bad-mouth managements that displease them.

The assault on Liberty shares something else with previous campaigns. It is not clear what any form of proxy battle with the UK Active Value duo. Shandwick has also been one of their better investments, its shares roughly trebling from their purchase price.

It is claimed that UK Active Value has made a compound return of about 23 per cent a year over the past five years, though this is not at all easy to verify. The fund is registered in the British Virgin Isles, its track record hidden from prying eyes. What is clear, from investments whose price and timing are known, is that some have turned out badly.

They probably made a 50 per cent return on Scholl and a similar return on Chime Communications. Sir Tim Bell's PR outfit that they bought into in February. But Kenwood, in which they held 4.25 million shares bought at about 200p, has seen its price fall to 119p.

They have also lost a quarter of their £1 million investment in City Site Estates, a property company. However, Mr Myerson and Mr Treger are already moving on to more ambitious adventures. This summer, UK Active Value took a 65 per cent stake in a small timber company and both men joined the board. They have just installed as chairman Stuart Wallis, the former Fisons chief executive who replaced Mr Stevens as chairman of Scholl. Mr Myerson is promising acquisitions of £100 million or more.

One City observer said: "They nurse an ambition to run a public company - though neither of them have any experience which, on the face of it, would qualify them to do so." Liberty will not be the last we hear of this active duo.

Samuel chains, and to put them to shareholders for consideration and approval. The motion was comfortably defeated. No thanks to Mr Treger and Mr Myerson. Signet has continued to make a steady recovery.

UK Active Value argues that, even if defeated, their motions act as catalysts for change. Some investing institutions are happy for Mr Myerson and Mr Treger to shake things up, sparing them the trouble of getting their hands dirty. Gordon Stevens, who fought a lengthy battle with the duo while he was chairman of Scholl, the footwear company, wryly observes: "They are nothing if not active."

More positively, Shandwick's Lord Chadlington (formerly Peter Gummer) has said: "They phone you up a lot. They hassle you and they are constantly snapping at your heels, but frankly we rather enjoyed it. If you are open with them and absolutely frank and share their objectives, I have found you can work with them very well."

Lord Chadlington's views may be coloured by the fact that Shandwick, a public relations company, has not had to fight any form of proxy battle with the UK Active Value duo. Shandwick has also been one of their better investments, its shares roughly trebling from their purchase price.

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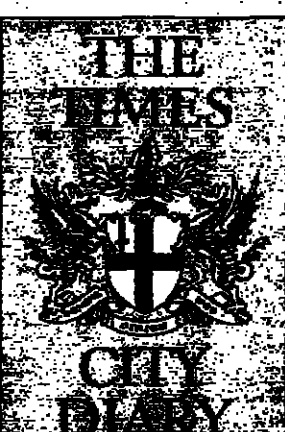
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Clear vision

IAN TAYLOR, the Northern Ireland spokesman for the Tories who bust the party apart this week by resigning over Europe, had previously lined up a nice little non-executive job at something called Navision Software UK. Nothing wrong with that, as opposition spokespeople are allowed such little diversions to boost their frugal incomes. But the announcement in the *Financial Times* has caused huge surprise among William Hague's team, or so they claim. Navision says: the whole thing was cleared with the relevant Commons committee. But there are mutterings among the Tories about divided loyalties. I am told this one could rumble on.



ONCE a salesman, Sir Lawrence Barratt may be retiring (again) as chairman of the housebuilder he founded at next month's annual meeting, but he cannot resist a last-minute sales pitch. The circular to shareholders is accompanied by a heartfelt farewell thanking them for their support. That's the first three times. Now the hard sell. "I would also like to remind you of two valuable offers available exclusively to individual Barratt shareholders," he says, and takes up another 16 lines detailing the discounts he is offering. Investors who go to the meeting might do best to leave their cheque books behind.

As if Denis Cassidy, chairman of Liberty, orders his spin-doctors to dig up the dirt on Myerson and distribute it around the market, they will not have far to look - assuming they have the necessary independence from their biggest shareholder. I put the point to a Shandwick hand, who promptly starts to spin like a top. "There would only be a problem if Myerson did or could in some way try to influence us. There's no point in taking an investment in Shandwick and then inhibiting Shandwick from acting in a professional way."

A PARTY has been arranged on November 12 to celebrate 40 years at Wood Gundy of Tony Porter. Something of a fixture in the City, Porter makes prices in North American and Canadian stocks and is the only partner of Wood Gundy still working following the merger with CIBC in 1988. He joined the trading desk just as Kennedy was assassinated and remembers the turmoil on the London market then - trading volumes doubled to 20 million shares. Yes, 20 million. Civilised times.

PR speak

LIBERTY, the old-fashioned retailer under assault from a band of rebel shareholders, is using Shandwick as spin-doctor to put over its message. Fair enough: except that in the other camp is Brian Myerson, the South African investor who is part of the two-man team responsible for the UK Active Value Fund, the corporate culture that takes stakes in undervalued businesses. And Active Value, by an extraordinary coincidence, owns almost 15 per cent of Shandwick. A remarkably cosy relationship - Lord Chadlington, chairman of the PR firm and once better known as Peter Gummer, described Myerson and his sidekick Julian Treger as "very helpful", which is more than several of their other victims can say.

Understudy

A BRAVURA performance from Nicholas Witchell, the BBC presenter who stepped into the breach and filled for Carol Vorderman at the AIM awards dinner on Thursday. Vorderman was struck down by a viral infection and could not make it. Witchell, apparently keen to do as many of these dashes as possible, stepped into the breach. He had a little trouble pronouncing some of the more esoteric AIM contenders and explaining what the more high-tech ones actually did for a living, but performed very creditably given the lack of preparation - and the fact that he had come straight from presenting the 6 pm news.

So just how much was he paid, given the short notice? I took a straw poll, and £5,000 was about what the City professionals reckoned. Wrong! I am reliably told a celeb of Witchell's grading is unlikely to have seen his fee go too far into four figures.

MARTIN WALLER



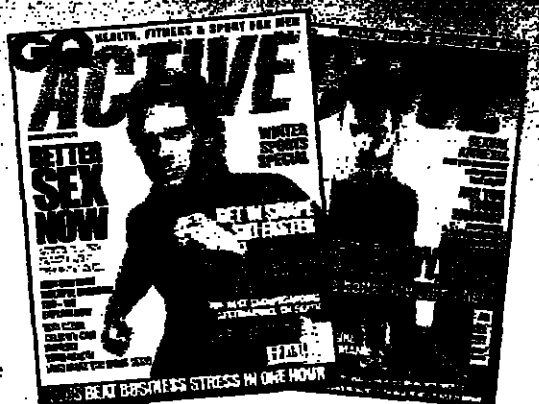
Witchell: four-figure sum?

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CHANGING TIMES

Sparks fly over circuit breakers

ARTHUR LEVITT, the Securities and Exchanges Commission chairman, has intervened in the Wall Street dispute over the so-called circuit breakers that halted share trading twice on Monday. He said the SEC would study the use of temporary trading halts applied for the first time this week. They were installed after the 1987 crash. Richard Grasso, chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, said the trading halts calmed down the market, but many traders disagreed with him. Mr Levitt suggested a possible systems change under which the breaks are triggered by a certain percentage fall rather than by the more static

Oliver August reports on the dispute brewing over the use of measures to halt Wall Street trading

interruptions after a 350-point drop and a 550-point fall. Circuit breakers have a number of powerful enemies in Washington. Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, said he had "never been wholly friendly to circuit breakers or stopping markets because I am always concerned

as to how in the world you are going to get them started again". Michael Oxley, chairman of the Congressional Finance Committee, said: "To close equities trading in a free economy is a dramatic event. We have to remember that when you close off selling you close off buying as well." Trading on the New York Stock Exchange was halted at 2.55pm on Monday. It restarted half an hour later but was stopped for the day only 25 minutes after the resumption. The breaks are meant to stop market panics by giving investors time to rethink their strategies. But traders insist that Monday's plunge was not the result of a panic.

NEWS

Judge has power to free Woodward

Louise Woodward began a mandatory life sentence for the murder of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen — clinging to the hope that the judge in her trial may yet free her.

She faces the prospect of 15 years without parole after her conviction for second-degree murder by a jury in Massachusetts. But her lawyers will work over the weekend to make sure that she does not have to serve the sentence. Page 1, 2, 3, 5, 22, 23

Diana charity card sellers 'miserly'

Two firms licensed to sell charity Christmas cards by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund were criticised for making miserly donations of barely five pence in the pound from the proceeds. Pages 1, 6

£5m masterpiece

A 'worthless' painting in a Lancashire church could be a masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance worth up to £5 million. Page 1

McAleese triumphant

Mary McAleese has won a landslide victory to become Ireland's eighth President. Pages 1, 18

'Costlier' holidays

Millions of tourists would face higher holiday costs if ministers press ahead with plans to prevent children from taking holidays during term-time, travel industry leaders claim. Page 17

Bill stirs fears

The Government will come under new pressure to ensure that the Human Rights Bill will not restrict media activity. Page 8

Hypocrisy charge

Charities representing the elderly accused the Government of hypocrisy over its decision not to alter cold weather payments. Page 8

French lesson sparks writing revival

A Kent school is the focus of attention after a teacher there taught her class of five-year-olds to use joined-up writing. Most children of that age can barely write two letters together on a line. The teacher's method was adapted from France. Page 10

Crowning glory

If the Royal Family wishes to reform itself into a populist monarchy, it might consider crowning the future King Charles III at Wembley. Page 13

Experiment fails

An experiment to let birds of prey breed without interference on one of Scotland's sporting estates has led to a catastrophic decline in grouse. Page 11

Church is guilty

The Pope admitted that Christian prejudice had contributed to the persecution of Jews. Page 15

Hotel life

Liverpudlian sensitivities are on display as the Adelphi Hotel features in a TV series. Page 17

Hillary gets tough

Hillary Clinton "admonished" Northern Ireland's hardline politicians for not delivering the peace that people want. Page 18



The Royal Yacht Britannia sails up the River Clyde on a two-day visit to Glasgow. She is to be decommissioned after her last voyage around Britain.

NEWS FEATURES

Valerie Grove: A full life has given Annie Lindsey her determination to fight for the right to die. Page 21

Michael Gove: Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke are not diabolical thrashing around chaotically. The roars they emitted this week were the product of careful planning. Page 20

City under the sea: Twenty feet beneath the choppy waters of Alexandria's Eastern Harbour, a world of ancient glories where Antony and Cleopatra held court is being revealed. Page 9

OPINION

Trial and ordeal: All human emotion has been exposed in the courtroom. This sad Louise Woodward affair is certainly not over. Page 22

All saints: Two deaths have dominated the public mood this year, that of Diana, Princess of Wales, and that of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Page 23

LETTERS

EMU: martyrs statues at Abbey; Woodward trial; Holbein's skull; prayers and pints; Hitler at Pyres; moral portraits. Page 23

COLUMN

Simon Jenkins: Can enchanting Bhutan resist the temptations of modernity. Page 22

Brownen Maddox: Who could not identify with Louise Woodward's cry, "How can they do this?" Page 22

Simon Barnes: Idiocy, is the white man's burden in Africa. Page 22

COLUMN

Taylor Woodrow: The housing building and construction group parted company with John Castle, its chief executive. Page 27

Levitt: Disgraced financier Roger Levitt was bailed but his lawyers said: "He might as well be under house arrest." Page 27

Halifax: Fund manager M&G believed to be being stalked by Halifax may be put on sale next year. Page 27

COLUMN

Cricket: Michael Atherton twice offered to resign the captaincy this summer but was persuaded to stay by officials. Page 33

Golf: Colin Montgomerie took an eight and Bernhard Langer threw a club away as they dropped four strokes off the lead in the Volvo Masters. Page 34

Tennis: Greg Rusedski was beaten by Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the quarter-finals. Page 40

MAGAZINE

The magazine: Jeffrey Archer goes Mayor-watching in New York to see how it's done. Page 8
Lenten revelations: Gentle side of Islam. Page 40
Food: Jonathan Meades enjoys the gutsy approach of the Chef's Chef of the Year. Page 61

MUSIC

Harry Hill: The big interview. Page 6
Bills August: The Arctic-cool director from Denmark. Page 10
Music: Spiceworld Page 13
Designers gilded: Ideas from the definitive book on design. Pages 26, 27

WEEKEND

Prince Edward: My plans for the golden wedding gala. Pages 13
Property: Inside courtier Alexander McQueen's bedroom. Page 10
Travel: Austria; Kuwait; Eyreans. Pages 23-33

VISION

Part 6 of new British food and drink plus the taste of Ireland

Vision

7-day TV & Radio guide

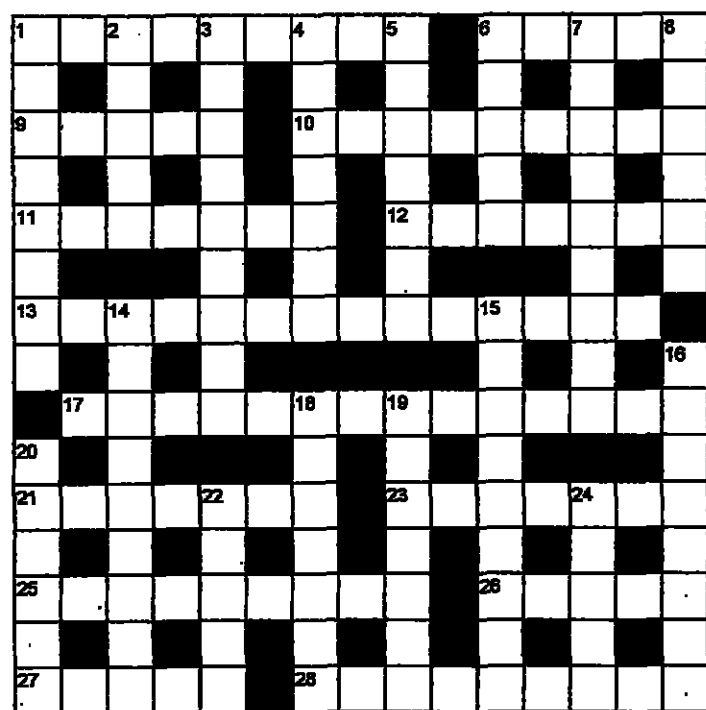
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For our younger readers

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,626

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



ACROSS

- Learning from book, ultimately these days learner has advantage (9).
- Obscure French army to retreat? (5).
- A story new and strange (5).
- Origin of a payment received by messenger (9).
- Tree beginning to rally (7).
- Yet injecting phosphorus into tiny creature (7).
- Dye applied to cloth by worker who controls men in company? (8).
- Finalist, 1 cycle extraordinarily accurately (14).
- One who's lazy takes taxi with luggage to entrance of Euston (7).
- Emotionally sensitive person disturbed by recurrent disorder (7).
- Queen's pudding (9).
- Convey to male representative of family (5).
- American writer's unknown verse (5).
- Determine beforehand when period ran, roughly (9).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,620

PLEAMARKET GAIM
I B T I R M A
UNFASTER ODDITY
O T E R D U S E
BOGYS HANDSOME
M T E C U
ONCE SHAMEFUL
S N R N T
MINTMASTER TRIM
N R E E R H
UNAMUSED STRIAK
N A T I O L
CAVEIN EFFENDIS
O I A S U E A
TINY NISTLESSY

DOWN

- Carrier hit — escalating gunfire cut by 50% (9).
- A branch of the basket-making industry (5).
- Murder done with guile? It's measured in degrees (9).
- Make blue cover to hold old record (7).
- Noble supported by current king, like his predecessor (7).
- Extra amount public transport admits aboard (5).
- Reckon sailors being thrown into river is contradictory? (9).
- August second for university exams (6).
- Copper taken in by a butler, resolved to burn the midnight oil (9).
- Run into bar after headless fowl (9).
- It's a bloomer to ride around America with the latest in fashion (8).
- Crown left without support, of course, totally upset (7).
- Kind of lens that looks out of place, so to speak (4-3).
- Pole's covering crown with diamonds on top (6).
- A cry raised in tune (5).
- Cheese essential for buffet table (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,625

RULEOFFTHUMB TIC
O N N A N U A O
EVANGELIC TOKEN
N O L A T E T
PROVISO PROPANE
M T E C U
OWING DATESTAMP
E S E A R L
IRONWORKS EXTRA
T I I M P T
ELASTIC AMIABLE
R T V A N I L
CRIB BRIGADING
O I A S U E A
CON GREENKEEPER

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: G. McGinn, Runcorn, Cheshire; R. Barry-Morris, Middlesbrough; B. Teffer, Shipley, W. Yorks; D. Hann, Winchmore Hill, London; S. Pulk, Huron, Essex.

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HOURS OF DARKNESS
TODAY
Sun sets 6:54 am
Moon sets 4:34 pm
Moon rises 7:39 am
First quarter November 7
London 4:24 pm to 6:56 am
Bristol 4:43 pm to 7:05 am
Edinburgh 4:32 pm to 7:22 am
Glasgow 4:30 pm to 7:24 am
Manchester 4:36 pm to 7:10 am
Perthshire 4:58 pm to 7:14 am

HIGH TIDES
TODAY
AA
London Bridge 06:06
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UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

FRANK LEBOEUF

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THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

NOVEMBER 1 1997

HOW ATHERTON CAME TO STAY ON AS ENGLAND CAPTAIN



WHEN MICHAEL ATHERTON MET DAVID GRAVENEY AT THE REGENT'S PARK HILTON ON AUGUST 28 HE HAD DECIDED TO STAND DOWN AS ENGLAND CAPTAIN

GRAVENEY RELAYED THE DECISION ON HIS MOBILE PHONE TO DAVID LLOYD, AT HOME IN MANCHESTER WHO INSISTED ON SPEAKING TO ATHERTON

WITH GRAVENEY A BYSTANDER ATHERTON WAS PERSUADED TO CHANGE HIS MIND BY AN IMPASSIONED SPEECH BY LLOYD

The persuaders

The drama of the 1997 Ashes series was matched by a secret saga of resignations and retractions.
Alan Lee unravels the twists in a tangled plot

LAST NIGHT Michael Atherton played golf in the dark, a benefit-year stunt but a symbolic one. Atherton can see clearly now, the confusing fog of late summer lifted from his mind. He reflects reluctantly, but with wonder, on the fact that he twice attempted to resign the England captaincy, only to be persuaded to change his mind.

It is two months since his dramatic decision to continue as captain, yet the full account of the circumstances has until now remained untold. It involves most of the most prominent men in English cricket, all of whom made it a crusade to keep Atherton in command.

Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, simply refused to accept his resignation when he first offered it in early August. David Graveney and David Lloyd, respectively chairman of selectors and coach, together converted him again on an extraordinary evening three weeks later, only hours before the announcement that he would continue. Even Alec Stewart, who would have inherited the post if Atherton had stood down, played a significant part.

The Times has reconstructed these events and Atherton, though preferring it otherwise, He instinctively resists publicity — why else, on collecting his OBE at Buckingham Palace this week, would he avoid two exit signs directing him towards official and press photographers and escape through an unmarked third door?

He may also suspect that his late change of heart might be regarded as vacillation, a sign of weakness. In fact, it is the opposite. He procrastinated only through concern that the team might need a change, but he resumes the job aware that he has the support of those within the game and many outside it.

The salient events began on Monday, July 28, as the fourth Test at Headingley ended in ignominious defeat. England, 3-0 winners of the one-day internationals and

triumphant in the first Test at Edgbaston, had regressed alarmingly. After a draw at Lord's, two heavy losses had followed.

Graveney recalls walking into the dressing-room an hour after the game ended. "Athers had come out of a tough press conference. He was sitting alone, staring ahead like a man who had seen a ghost." From that moment, Graveney knew he had a battle to protect and preserve the man he unwaveringly believed should lead the side against West Indies this winter.

Two weeks later, when the Ashes were conceded at Trent Bridge,

Atherton told the chairman of selectors he should find a new captain. "He thought it better for the team — always his primary concern — that he should go before the final Test," Graveney said. Had it not been for Lord MacLaurin, that is what would have happened.

Atherton confirmed: "Ian MacLaurin basically rejected my resignation. He said he wanted to get away from the media pressurising individuals to go. It's true I was very conscious of the press view, that I had very little goodwill left and that it was my turn to suffer."

With rich irony, Lord MacLaurin found himself in a similar position a month later. Infuriated by his failure to introduce a two-division county championship, he was prepared to resign. Among the messages imploring him against it was one from Graveney, reminding him of his stance on Atherton. In his case, it was not the media but the county chairmen who dogged him. But Lord MacLaurin, too, stayed on.

Atherton, however, felt his acceptance was only a temporary measure. He was convinced that the final Test, which was due to start at the Oval on August 21, would be his last as captain, still more so when England collapsed feebly on the opening day and when his own batting began to depress him. "It was only there that I felt my batting just wasn't with it, mentally. It seemed to add to the case to stand down."

England's stunning victory, two days later, initially made no difference to Atherton. He intended to follow his own itinerary and take several days to consider the matter. "If we had not won at the Oval, there is no way I would be in the job now, but I didn't immediately see it that way. I just thought it ironic that I was under the greatest pressure to go when I could handle the side better than before, when I knew so much more and when I had a management team I could really relate to."

For five days, Atherton kept his own counsel. He went to Devon with his girlfriend, Izzy, and had

no contact with either the team management or his most trusted adviser, his father, Alan. "I felt I had to work it out myself," he said. Yet on the morning of Thursday, August 28, when he rang Graveney, he remained unsure.

Graveney took the call at Leicester, where he was watching the champions-elect, Glamorgan. "It was a relief to hear from him but I didn't ask him what he had decided and he didn't tell me. We just arranged to meet that night in the bar of the Regent's Park Hilton, opposite Lord's."

Both arrived on time at 7pm. Atherton bought drinks and Graveney, anxious at what lay ahead, steered him to the smoking section of the lounge and lit a cigarette. "The first thing Atherton said was that he still wasn't sure," he recalled. "For the next hour, I did my best but there were a lot of long silences from his side of the table. Finally, he said he thought it was time for a change."

Immediately, Atherton asked Graveney to join him at a Japanese restaurant for dinner. As they moved towards the lobby, however, Graveney asked him to wait while he made a phone call. He dialled

Continued on page 34

Roll out the tumbrils and sharpen your act, Arsene

SOMEWHERE along the line, I got the wrong idea about Arsene Wenger. Perhaps it was his physical resemblance to Robespierre — the famous "sea green incorruptible" of the French Revolution — but I took him to be the sort of man who would cleanse Arsenal's bad-boy image by sheer force of Gallic disdain. It's easy to picture him in a dog collar, too. I find. Nobody wears those weeny specs unless they have at some time flirted with the Catholic church.

So you can understand where the mistake arose. Oh yes, under this strict, high-

minded Monseigneur's influence, Ian Wright would definitely stop spitting at women. Tony Adams would become Piglet instead of Eeyore; and when he pushed back the wall ten yards, it would not be a real brick wall his car had just driven into. Once more the word "conviction" could be handed conversationally at Highbury without all the players looking shifty and telephoning their lawyers.

But something went awry with this happy prospect. Not only are the Arsenal players still shoving refs, swearing at them and getting suspended, but Wenger keeps justifying

their behaviour in the depressingly familiar manner of the stupid football manager he's not supposed to be. "Emmanuel wanted to protect

himself as the referee was running his way," he extenuated, lamely, after Emmanuel Petit pushed the ref. "Dennis has become some sort of trophy for referees to collect," he said this week. (The indispensable Bergkamp has been suspended for three games, mainly for backchat.)

Oh come on Arsene, you can do better than that. Two

weeks ago, teenage substitute Jason Crowe was sent off after only 33 seconds, on his debut appearance against Birmingham City. But Wenger explained: "Bir-

mingham had a player sent off earlier, and the referee just wanted to make it ten against ten." Well, I've never heard

such a pathetic excuse. As for the fracas in August when Wright charged back on to the pitch at Leicester to argue with the ref — "it was a minor incident, a story blown up out of all reality". To which one

can only say, Oh Arsene, are your glasses big enough?

Having your best players suspended is no joke. Next weekend, Arsenal will meet Manchester United without either Bergkamp or Petit. Wright has missed six games this season already — and in such a context, I can't help feeling that Wenger is being a bit silly complaining of a cosmic conspiracy against an innocent Arsenal.

True, his look-alike, Robespierre, wrote: "Any institution which does not suppose the people good, and the magistrate corruptible, is evil." But then Robespierre probably

never saw Ian Wright jumping two-footed with his dander up.

Perhaps it's a mistake to think footballers can change. And perhaps Arsene is not an intellectual, after all. It's our national folly to confuse a French accent with deep thinking and to be impressed by a man who drops words like "omnipresent" into fanzine interviews. But it's time to forget the subtle stuff, Arsene, and get tough with these boys. Tell them if they mess up on the pitch, you'll have their heads chopped off. It worked for Robespierre. It can work for you.



Wenger's Highbury revolution is being undermined

drink makes for the soul's improvement.

The Epistle to Diognetus

for it is written

Luke 4:8

RUGBY LEAGUE

Wembley offers slim hope for embattled Britain

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

TEAMS

IN THE past decade, Great Britain teams given almost no chance of winning have cobbled together victories against all conceivable odds. Even more than usual, logic suggests that Australia will win the opening match of the British Gas series at Wembley today.

In the past over the British game by the frighteningly one-sided world club championship, Australia look more daunting than at any time if it were possible — and the Australian Super League team represents only half the country's best players. For now, at least, the rest reside in the Australian Rugby League (ARL), whose team beat England in the 1995 World Cup final.

Worse than the rout of British club sides throughout the summer was the sobering thought that, far from having raised domestic standards, full-time professionalism and summer rugby have achieved nothing of the kind. The Super League, although entertaining enough, was exposed as "super" in name only and so inferior to the Australian version as to be laughable.

If the psychologist brought in by Andy Goodway, the British coach, can achieve anything, it will be to block out all negative thoughts about the world club championship from players' minds. Persuading themselves that they can beat Australia is half the battle; the physical side, against opponents generally more accomplished, is a more demanding test of character.

The only slight doubts about Australia arise in the inexperience of their pack at international level and the fact that they have lost their last three visits to Wembley — in 1973, 1990 and 1994. All those series were eventually won 2-1, which, in the present climate, Britain would probably settle for.

It is true that with their best 17, Britain can be competitive and more, but without five pivotal players — Shaun Edwards, Gary Connolly, Denis Betts, Tony Smith and Keiron Cunningham — the fabric of the side is threadbare in parts, whereas Australia can draw from a treasure trove. If there is a genuine threat to them, it can only derive from complacency.

In the four series meetings since 1988, Britain have managed the happy knack of one win. The last 3-0 whitewash was in 1986 and Britain have to go back to 1959 for the last series victory on home soil.

Without a unified Australia team, this is not strictly an "Ashes" series and neither is Australia the Kangaroos — a court ruled that the 89-year nickname was the "intellectual property" of the ARL — yet, Kangaroos or not, a win today would bring a feel-better factor to the battered domestic game.

Three years ago, similar portents of doom were swept aside at Wembley by Jonathan Davies and a try that enabled Britain to overcome the dismissal of Edwards and beat Australia by 8-4, which is where comparisons between the game then and now end.

Muscle is no longer the Australian prerequisite. The ethos of five tackles and kick has given way to getting the ball wide from the rucks and quickly into the hands of such dangerous runners as Lockyer, Sailor and Etmingshausen, who can test the worst area of weakness shown by British sides in the world championship — one-on-one defence.

Goodway has given free roles in attack to Andy Farrell and Jason Robinson because fire has to be met with fire.

"We're still obsessed with the need for good field position and six-tackle completion rates, whereas Australia do those things automatically and now attack you from anywhere on the park," Goodway said. "It's no good simply trying to counter them. You've got to respond by being clever, adventurous and reacting to the situation."

Whether an untested team is up to what Goodway is demanding, in terms of positional swapping and flexible game-plans, is one potential problem area. Another is the two-month lull for several players, notably Bobbie Goulding, who has not played since August because of suspension. The scrum half must be at his best if Britain are to stand any chance.

To say that a lot is expected of Farrell, not just of his captaincy, is an understatement. Playing a forward at stand-off half is hardly the risk associated with someone without his capabilities, but there is not just the goalkicking, tactical kicking and organising of the attack and defence to worry about. Somehow, he has to defuse Laurie Daley, the Australia playmaker.

The crowd this afternoon is expected to be roughly equivalent to the 41,000 that turned up for the opening game of the World Cup two years ago, again more in hope than expectation. England defied logic that day and beat Australia. Although heavy favourites, there are too many precedents for Australia to ignore this time.



Goodway conducts training yesterday for the game with Australia at Wembley. Photograph: Victoria Matthews



Montgomerie surveys his ball lying out of bounds at the 16th hole, where the Scot dropped three shots

Montgomerie hit by force eight

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN JEREZ

COLIN MONTGOMERIE'S progress towards a fifth successive European Order of Merit title was rudely interrupted when he took an eight at the 16th hole in the second round of the Volvo Masters here yesterday.

With only an eight-iron in his hands, Montgomerie hit a shot out of bounds and then compounded this error with a couple more bad shots as well, dropping three strokes to par on a par-five hole where he would have been hoping for a birdie.

Montgomerie then allowed his somewhat combustible temperament to get the better of him. He chose to disagree with three rules officials as to whether or not his ball, which was in a ploughed field, was in play before accepting the decision of John Parmer, the tournament director and chief referee.

"His ball was 25 to 30 yards out of bounds," Parmer said. "There should have been posts there marking the out of bounds but we never expected anyone to be there."

Montgomerie was 11 under par on the 16th tee. He had appeared relaxed and at ease with himself for most of the round as he built on his overnight position of six under par. Bernhard Langer, his nearest rival in the race for the Order of Merit, was four strokes behind him and

was now his fifth stroke into a bunker, exploded to ten feet, and was 11 under par.

Montgomerie's drive on the 16th finished on the right of the fairway. From there he aimed across the dog-leg, away from the water at one side of the green. It was not a difficult shot, but his ball lay in fluffy grass that got between the ball and the club face, thus preventing him from getting any spin on it.

The result was that he overhit the ball by 40 yards and it ended in the field. He played a provisional ball, which ended in more fluffy grass behind a greenside bunker and from there hit what

was now his fifth stroke into a bunker, exploded to ten feet, and was 11 under par.

Montgomerie's blood rushes to his head too quickly sometimes and his immediate reaction to the first rules official was to claim there were no out-of-bounds stakes visible and therefore his ball was still in play. As he stamped around in the field, he edgily waved photographers away. It took Parmer, a man of considerable experience and standing, to point out to him that the fence marking the boundaries of the course had fallen forward.

It is puzzling the way that Montgomerie allows himself

to get worked up. It was, as Lee Westwood, his playing partner, acknowledged, a piece of bad luck that he had hit a flier but Montgomerie could not control his temper.

It took him 40 minutes after he had signed his card before he cooled down enough to be able to talk and then he was very brief.

"I had 163 yards to the hole and my ball must have flown 190," he said, still visibly upset. "If I had taken a 64 I could not have won today and I have certainly not lost it." With that he turned on his heel.

Though Montgomerie's behaviour indicated how much pressure he is under as he tries to do something never done before, one's sympathy for him is reduced when it is realised that this was the second, not the third or final round. He is still only four strokes behind Patrick Sjöland and Westwood, the leaders. More importantly, perhaps, he is level with Langer, who had problems of his own.

The German took three putts on the 13th green and then took two shots to get out of a bunker on the 14th. He was so exasperated that he tossed his club at his golf bag. But Langer regained his composure and birdied the 18th for a round of 70 to join Montgomerie on eight under par. There is a lesson for Montgomerie in the way that Langer deals with crises but it appears to be one that he is unable to learn.

Parnevik changes swing to reap early reward

JESPER PARNEVIK, the Europe Ryder Cup player, picked the world's richest tournament to try a new swing and it worked for one day at least, earning him a share of the first-round lead at the \$4 million Tour Championship in Houston, Texas.

The Swedish player, runner-up in the Open Championship this year, garnered five birdies to join the American pair, David Duval and Jim Furyk, on 66, five under par. Duval is seeking his third tournament win in a row.

They were one stroke ahead of another American, Brad Faxon, in the last event of the

US PGA Tour season, restricted to the leading 30 money-winners this year. Tiger Woods, who heads the money-list, recorded a 69.

Parnevik, after struggling in practice, thought he had little alternative but to try a different swing. "I tried probably my fifth swing this week. It worked today. I hit the ball very well," Parnevik said.

"I'm so used to changing every day. The Open was the same thing. I was hitting it terribly. I just tried to find something that worked, to get the ball around. It was the same today. It worked better than I hoped."

FOR THE RECORD

BADMINTON

HONG KONG: Hong Kong Open. Quarter-finals: Mark Wong (Hk) beat Alan Lau (Hk) 15-11, 15-11. Semi-finals: Lau beat Wong 15-11, 15-11. Final: Lau beat Wong 15-11, 15-11.

GOLF

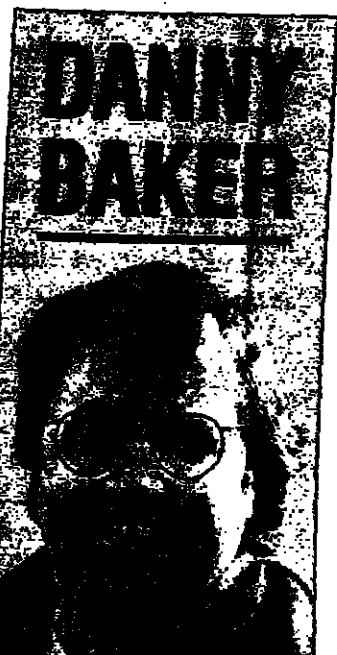
JEREZ: Volvo Masters. Leaders after two rounds (Great Britain and Ireland underlined): 1. Colin Montgomerie (Scot) 64, 64, 128 (54); 2. Darren Clarke (Eng) 65, 67, 132 (61); 3. Lee Westwood (Eng) 66, 68, 134 (62); 4. Bernhard Langer (Ger) 67, 69, 136 (63); 5. Tiger Woods (USA) 68, 70, 138 (64); 6. Paul Lawrie (Scot) 69, 71, 140 (65); 7. Jim Furyk (USA) 70, 72, 142 (66); 8. David Duval (USA) 71, 73, 144 (67); 9. Fred Couples (USA) 72, 74, 146 (68); 10. Steve Stricker (USA) 73, 75, 148 (69); 11. Chris DiMarco (USA) 74, 76, 150 (70); 12. Jeff Maggert (USA) 75, 77, 152 (71); 13. Jim Valeri (USA) 76, 78, 154 (72); 14. Greg Lesh (USA) 77, 79, 156 (73); 15. Jim Pate (USA) 78, 80, 158 (74); 16. Mark O'Meara (USA) 79, 81, 160 (75); 17. Jay Byrum (USA) 80, 82, 162 (76); 18. Tom Lehman (USA) 81, 83, 164 (77); 19. Jeff Sluman (USA) 82, 84, 166 (78); 20. John Cook (USA) 83, 85, 168 (79); 21. Mark Williams (USA) 84, 86, 170 (80); 22. Steve Flesch (USA) 85, 87, 172 (81); 23. David Toms (USA) 86, 88, 174 (82); 24. Greg Norman (Aus) 87, 89, 176 (83); 25. Peter Dinklage (USA) 88, 90, 178 (84); 26. Jeff Boros (USA) 89, 91, 180 (85); 27. John Kiser (USA) 90, 92, 182 (86); 28. Mark Williams (USA) 91, 93, 184 (87); 29. Greg Norman (Aus) 92, 94, 186 (88); 30. Peter Dinklage (USA) 93, 95, 188 (89); 31. Jeff Boros (USA) 94, 96, 190 (90); 32. Mark Williams (USA) 95, 97, 192 (91); 33. Peter Dinklage (USA) 96, 98, 194 (92); 34. Jeff Boros (USA) 97, 99, 196 (93); 35. Mark Williams (USA) 98, 100, 198 (94); 36. Peter Dinklage (USA) 99, 101, 200 (95); 37. Jeff Boros (USA) 100, 102, 202 (96); 38. Mark Williams (USA) 101, 103, 204 (97); 39. Peter Dinklage (USA) 102, 104, 206 (98); 40. Jeff Boros (USA) 103, 105, 208 (99); 41. Mark Williams (USA) 104, 106, 210 (100); 42. Peter Dinklage (USA) 105, 107, 212 (101); 43. Jeff Boros (USA) 106, 108, 214 (102); 44. Mark Williams (USA) 107, 109, 216 (103); 45. Peter Dinklage (USA) 108, 110, 218 (104); 46. 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Time to bring on the sports stars full of substance

If I heard the thing right, and don't make me sign for this, it seems as if a group of teenage girls out in China have been swimming up and down the pool in times that make the world and Olympic records look as if they were set by Clare Short with weights around her ankles. Now it turns out that the times they achieved will not be recognised because, before their dip, the sweet young things had all been chewing on some unknown weed or root that acts upon them as spinach to Popeye. Am I alone in getting thoroughly cheesed off with this idiotic board of weights-and-measure merchants who keep stealing away triumphant sporting pinnacles from the world because of technicalities born in the backroom test tube?

Isn't it about time, for instance, that we held two Olympic Games simultaneously rather than the existing Alternative (drag) Miss World has sprung up alongside the dreary old real thing? One Games would be the traditional noble but restricted event based upon classical ideals and honest sweat, while the other would feature an equally superb array of athletes who happen to be hepped up to the eyeballs on tearaway junk. I know which one I'd tune into. I mean, how fast can a human body run 100 metres? How high can we jump given the chance and Right Stuff? We just don't know.

Surely anyone who, as a child, saw the film *The Absent-Minded*



Professor, and marvelled at the basketball players constantly airborne, will always have a nagging voice somewhere in the back of their heads as to the body unchained. Does literature deny itself its Alices or *Fear & Loathing*? Whither *Sgt Pepper*, *Electric Ladyland*, *Pet Sounds* or *Blonde on Blonde* without a bracing off-mike fillip? (OK, OK, I've heard *Be Here Now* but I'm not claiming a coconut every time.) So why is sport so squeamish

about its pharmaceutical virginity? Sport is not about fussy old ledger-book attainment but rollicking global entertainment.

Imagine for a moment a test case. Coventry City v Everton the other week: 0-0. Self-styled worst match in the world. Nineteen thousand or so paying customers groan at the halcyon whistle knowing they've got plenty more to endure. How much more of a winter warmer would it be for those attending if they knew that somewhere behind the scenes right then, Gordon Strachan and Howard Kendall were opening a wall-mounted medicine chest and saying: "Well boys, that was atrocious. We owe these people a spectacle. You're going out for the second half full of amphetamines." What larks, Pip! No time-wasting at corners or painstaking deliberation at free kicks. Crash bang wallop. Gimme the ball, gimme the ball just *gimme the ball*!

The only drawback might be players asking the referee how long was left every thirty seconds, but even that might be amusing to watch. This is not to argue for the decriminalisation of drugs. Simply the banning of drugs-testing. Leave it up to the individual athletes or coaches concerned and have the authorities decline from "busting" dressing-rooms. Then if Chinese teenagers swim four lengths of the pool in 15 seconds, then 15 seconds it is. The rival chemists in the United States will simply have to pull their socks up.

Up your jumper revisited

EVERY day I receive belching sackfuls of letters in response to my query recently about the legality of letting a goalkeeper stuff the ball up a player's shirt, then having that player run the length of the pitch in order to dump the ball across the opposing line in the manner of laying an egg. Goal! Most seem to think the manoeuvre is covered by ungenerously conduct that will get the culprit a booking, but are undecided on whether the score stands. A Mr Butcher, of Exeter, is convinced that such a goal was actually scored long ago, that the goal stood but that the rules of the game were then swiftly changed. However, I can find no such direct reference in the FA rulebook and this, coupled with the news that Mr Butcher

takes as his source a dimly remembered Sporting Facts page from a *Dandy* annual, leads me to think the waters are still muddy.

However, this period while the jury's out does give me an opportunity to pose my favourite football question of all time, to which there is a clear answer. And here it is: How can a player score two goals for his own side and in the meantime have no one else touch the ball? Got that? Now this is no trick. It could happen quite easily in any game. The answer is brilliant but unremarkable so don't start involving earthquakes, warplay or referee's backslides. It's a simple poser: Player scores both goals in a 2-0 victory and between goals nobody else touches the ball. Answer next week.



Yuranov at the pinnacle of his career, left, and slumping it against Italy in the World Cup this week

Yuran, the Lion in winter

I must confess it was very peculiar watching Sergei Yuranov playing for Russia against Italy on Wednesday. I had hoped he was... well, not dead but certainly a hopeless vodka-addicted wanderer lost at the bottom of some forgotten Soviet mineshaft. Then, as if remembering some dark promise to those who had initiated this bet, he suddenly became a Wolves defender and was ordered from the pitch. Later, he turned out for the team on something like a regular basis but, that one mad spell aside, he seemed to spend most of his time wandering

thought it would be. It is like a dream for me.

To be fair, unlike the mysterious Kulkov, Yuran did actually play for Millwall. It was between half-past four and twenty to five during a game against Wolves. He was brilliant during that ten minutes. Then, as if remembering some dark promise to those who had initiated this bet, he suddenly became a Wolves defender and was ordered from the pitch. Later, he turned out for the team on something like a regular basis but, that one mad spell aside, he seemed to spend most of his time wandering

around defences from Wigan and Bristol, his mind far away, as Fred Kite so perfectly put it, on "all them wheatfields and ballet in the evenings".

One friend of mine swears he played against Gillingham in a hurry Russian hat but I think this is just wishful thinking. As for Kulkov, I don't know. He certainly made a debut of sorts, but was then the recipient of a string of dubious ailments and he just disappeared like a kulak in a crackdown.

What an odd period that was. There is still no proper explanation of how these two roving Russkies were lured to London, south. True, they pulled down about five grand a week for a whole year but they could have got that any place. They certainly got fat in their time in exile. Whatever. We Millwall supporters don't even talk about them now. The joke's over. But then, on Wednesday, here is Sergei again, slimmer, covered in snow on worldwide TV and causing the Italian national team all kinds of problems.

How very different from an away game for the Lions at Home Park, Plymouth. But then that was at the pinnacle of his career.

□ Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1089am) every Saturday from 5.30pm.

Referee's piques and troughs

MUCH as I enjoyed the sending off of Arsenal's Petit for touching the referee, I must say the official concerned, Mr Durkin, really ought to have looked more shame-faced about it. A rule that doesn't allow one man to touch another simply because they have been allocated different hats within a national pastime is both pretentious and emasculating. Touching or even light showing referees cannot be confused with assault or threatening behaviour.

In the event Mr Durkin became very theatrical. He effected anger and outrage. His eyes bulged and his mouth wobbled like Mussolini at his height and it seemed as if he could do to stop himself looking straight at the cameras and frothing. "Did you see that? Did you see what he did! That was assault, wasn't it? I could have him locked up for that!" (He did actually shout something but the replay showed it was merely a disappointing "Get off").

The point remains, however, that he showed pique when referees are not entitled to take things personally with embarrassing shows of emotion, otherwise they may as well burst into tears when a team they don't like scores a goal. If I see Mr Durkin in my local Tesco's queueing for a hot chicken I shall make it my business to jostle him. Only by such actions might the FA be dragged into the real world.

Charlton's master class

JUST how good was Jack Charlton during the commentary on Ireland v Belgium? He was very good. Wrong calls, off-mike muttering, unrepentant opinion in the face of a replay, belligerent, subjective and partisan. He said "we" and "us" about Ireland and "them" and "they" about Belgium. Tremendous. The David Pleats and Garth Crooks of the world were made to stand naked. In one 90-minute masterclass, Jack called everything as he saw it, even when his vision was superbly cock-eyed. All of which deeply underlined the traditional British coverage cop-out of remaining even, calm and dispassionate while reporting on a sport whose worldwide triumph is built on just the opposite.

MOTOR RALLYING

McRae steps up title pace

COLIN McRAE claimed a clear lead at the end of the first full day of the Australian rally yesterday, after the retirement of Juha Kankkunen, of Finland. The British driver, in a Subaru, finished with an overall time of 1hr 32min 28sec.

McRae, who must win in Australia to keep alive his

world title challenge, was nine seconds ahead of Richard Burns, his compatriot, in a Mitsubishi. Tommi Makinen of Finland, the world championship leader and title-holder, in a Mitsubishi, was sixth, 1min 45sec behind McRae.

Kankkunen, fastest on the eleventh and final stage of the

day, was withdrawn by his Ford team because he was no longer in a position to finish among the leaders after an earlier time penalty.

Alister McRae, the younger brother of Colin, driving a Volkswagen, was in third place among the two-litre World Cup contenders.

A PRIZE DRAW

THE TIMES

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The Freelander is for those who want the style of an off-roader but the practicality and easy driving of a saloon. The VR6 is the raciest Volkswagen Golf of them all, sexy in black with black leather interior, and the Espace, above, is for serious weekend drivers, diesel-powered for maximum fuel savings on long journeys with flexible loading space.

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HOW TO ENTER Collect ten differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and two differently numbered tokens from *The Sunday Times*. A final token will be published in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow. Attach your tokens to an entry form (the last one will appear on tomorrow). Entries must be received by the closing date of Monday November 10, 1997.

CHANGING TIMES

EQUESTRIANISM: BRITONS DISAPPOINT ON OPENING DAY OF WORLD CUP SHOW

Brazilian riders strike first blow

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR IN MILLSTREET, CO CORK

BRAZILIAN riders dominated the opening speed class of the Millstreet Vohu World Cup Show yesterday. Alvaro de Miranda Neto, on Arisco Lucky Strike, and Rodrigo Pessoa, on Loro Piana Wanda, finishing first and second respectively. Edward Doyle, on The Great Composer, brought some cheer to the Ireland side by finishing third.

Although many of the 58 riders — including most of the Britons — appeared to be using the competition as a "school" for the bigger events to come, the dashing De Miranda Neto, 24, was as

delighted with his win as if he had won the World Cup. "It's my first time here and I could not ask for a better start — I just hope it continues," he said.

It was a fine return to form by Arisco Lucky Strike, who finished seventh in the Hamburg Derby two months ago, but was withdrawn from the Helsinki World Cup Show two weeks ago because of injury.

De Miranda Neto, who is based in Brussels, has been placed regularly on the international circuit this summer. He attributes his confidence to his team bronze-medal win in Atlanta — the first time Brazil had won a medal in an Olympic equestrian event. "It

made me train harder because it told me that nothing is impossible," he said.

Di Lampard, one of 14 Britons here, arrived just as the class was starting after fog had delayed her flight. With no time to walk the course, she gamely leapt aboard Equity, a 12-year-old owned by Jenny Willment, nearly to fall when the mare stopped abruptly at the second fence.

William Funnell, ninth, on Comex, and Tim Stockdale, eleventh, on Toggi Santa's Echo, produced the best British performances. Michael Whitaker, preparing for the renovated Two Step for the Volvo World Cup qualifier tonight — the main event of

the three-day meeting — gave the German gelding a gentle school, incurring 125 time faults. John Whitaker has a less satisfactory outing on Cowboy Magic Barry Bug, incurring 12 faults.

The British were again out of luck in the Horseware Power and Speed competition, the Irish, led by Trevor Coyle on Bollworms Vivaldi, producing a clean sweep, with Stockdale fourth on Halida.

Only ten of the 56 starters went clear over the first eight fences to qualify for the second speed part of the event. Nick Skelton, one of Britain's best hopes, failed to qualify when Virtual Village Zalta knocked a brick out of the wall.

SNOOKER: WORLD CHAMPION STAVES OFF UPSET TO ADVANCE TO SEMI-FINALS

Durable Doherty back from brink

FROM PHIL YATES IN MALTA

RELIEF was etched all over the face of Ken Doherty, the world champion, after he passed a test of character to defeat Joe Grech 5-4 in the quarter-finals of the Malta Grand Prix here on Thursday.

Doherty is playing poorly, yet it was difficult to imagine Grech, a silver-haired former motorcycle messenger with the

Maltese Government who stands 155th in the world rankings, posing too many problems.

Yet only three hours after Alex Borg, another unknown Maltese player, had unexpectedly beaten Mark Williams, the world No 4, Doherty faced the prospect of an identical fate against an opponent best known for his billiards prowess.

An upset seemed to be in the offing

when Doherty trailed 4-3 with Grech 31-0 ahead in the eighth frame. But despite the majority of the reds being awkwardly placed, Doherty fought back to 4-4 and comfortably added the deciding frame.

There were times when I thought I was on the plane home," Doherty said. In the semi-finals tonight, Doherty faces Alain Robidoux or Tony Drago and Borg plays John Higgins or Nigel Bond.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Park's Tour hopes rise

GOLF Richard Coughlan and David Park, the Walker Cup players, have only one more hurdle to clear to gain players' cards for the PGA European Tour next year. They made it to the Tour School, over six rounds at San Roque and Guadalmina, in southern Spain from November 20-25, by being among the leading qualifiers from the final rounds of the pre-qualifier events. Steven Young, from Scotland, qualified from the French venue of St Cyprien on Thursday.

CRICKET England beat New Zealand by four wickets in Auckland yesterday in the opening game of their Cricket Max series. Chris Adams top-scored with 56.

CYCLING Brian Cookson, chairman of the British Cycling Federation executive committee, is the only nomination to fill the vacancy at the annual meeting of the organisation in Manchester today.

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Plenty of goals in extra time

The Peter Beardsley show is a much-loved classic that looks destined to run and run

Not inside, he said. Over there, instead. He pointed to a row of backless, blue plastic seats. The shouts and exhortations of the youth-team players, still out training, carried over on the wind. Peter Beardsley wanted to talk first, get changed later. He pulled on a sweatshirt and began, the plumes of his breath dashing out into the cold, crisp Lancashire air. And, for an enchanting few minutes, it was like listening to 121 years of the reminiscences of *Little Big Man*.

His fondest memory, he said, was the goal he chipped over Joe Corrigan against Brighton and

Hove Albion five minutes from the end of the 1983-84 season. He was in the Newcastle United team, then, the team of Chris Waddle and Kevin Keegan that had won promotion to the old first division. "There was not another goal scored in Kevin Keegan's time at the club as a player," he said. "That's what made it special."

Then there was the Liverpool team of the late Eighties. He won two league titles there, in 1988 and 1990, and the FA Cup in between. They went 29 games unbeaten at one stage, that team that was one of the great sides of recent years.

John Barnes, Ray Houghton and Craig Johnston helped him to create the chances. John Aldridge finished them all off. "In those first two years there," he said, "Barnes was the finest player I have seen bar none."

At Everton, he played in a misty time during the ill-fated second coming of Howard Kendall. In a poor side, he was still like a gem, sparkling amid the dross, always playing his heart out, rarely falling below his best.

And it all, of course, there was the success with England, too, the partnership with Gary Lineker that seemed to be the perfect match, the creator matched with the best predator there was. In the World Cup finals of 1986 and 1990, they brought their country the most success it had had since 1970.

Then it was back home to

Newcastle to play his part in the Keegan revolution. He was an integral part of the team that came so close to bringing the club its first league championship for nearly 70 years in 1996, but was tipped by Manchester United. He stayed on and began to prepare to join the coaching side of the club.

And that is where Beardsley's history lesson, his happy narrative of a brilliant career packed with fulfilment and excellence, should have ended. That is where he wanted to end. Back in the North East whence he came, at St James' Park, where the fans adored him.

But the appointment of Kenny Dalglish as Keegan's successor in January this year condemned Beardsley to the role of a bit-part player and thwarted his ambitions of moving into coaching at the club. In August, Newcastle sold him to Bolton Wanderers for £500,000.

For those of us who have long been admirers of Beardsley's wonderful passing, his shimmies and that trick of feinting one way then the other with exaggerated movements of both feet

that he could have patented, his signing by Colin Todd was like a bonus, something that propels him into occasions such as that today, when he will line up once more against Liverpool in the Reebok Stadium, an uncomfortable reminder, for their manager, Roy Evans, of a lost hegemony.

The shock of his exit from Newcastle, though, has left Beardsley, one of the most courteous and well-respected professionals in the country, in something of a no-man's land as he hears his own last stand as a player. For one thing, he cannot get Newcastle out of his system. There may be a degree of sentimentalism about this match, but he is unequivocal about the fact that Newcastle are his first love, the first result he looks for.

His departure was made worse by the fact that he came so close to a perfect, semi-symmetrical end to his career. The club has even awarded him a testimonial, something for which Keegan has prom-



Beardsley thinks he can cure his eight-year-old son of his goalkeeping obsession while the love affair with Newcastle will run on undimmed through the family

ised to return to St James' Park for the first time.

"I enjoyed my time there," Beardsley said, "and who's to say I won't end up back there? It is something I would think long and hard about given the opportunity. It is not down to me any more. To a certain extent, my destiny was in my own hands when I was there but it has now been taken away."

To cloud the water further, management, increasingly, is something that appeals to him, but those to whom he is close, men such as Keegan and Arthur Cox, who are both rumoured to be trying to entice him to Fulham, have encouraged him to keep playing.

"I could have sat on the bench at Newcastle for a year and have been very well off doing it," Beardsley,

36, said, "but, at the end of that year, I would have had to pack in because you cannot do that and then come back at my age."

"I was helping at Newcastle's centre of excellence and a lot of people were saying 'he's getting involved in the youth coaching', but that never really materialised. Had the manager said 'stay and do the youth and play as and when', then maybe I would have done that."

But, to be fair to Kenny — and whatever people think, there is no animosity between us — he said he couldn't guarantee me a first-team place at any time.

"I want to keep playing but I do not want to keep playing and end up looking silly. I want to play at a

level where I feel I am achieving something and helping people."

"Your ambitions as a player change with age. I see myself now at Bolton in the sort of role that Kevin did when he first came to Newcastle as a player. I want to help the younger players and improve this as a club. I want to help them to get to another level. Success now would be to get them into the top half of the table come Christmas."

"I would certainly give it a go as a manager. Five years ago, I thought 'no way'. I might end up being a success, I might end up being a failure but I have got it in my mind that I will give it a go."

"If an offer came along tomorrow to go into management, it would not be a temptation unless it was at

a better standard than I am at now, because I still enjoy playing. I have got a couple of ideas. I would be prepared to work my way up with a smaller club. It all depends what comes along."

"I look at Carlisle, where I started my career, all the time now and I look at their results recently and I think maybe I could help a club like that to get going. The biggest problem now for clubs like that is, when you look at Fulham, money is a big thing now, and, by the time I pack in playing, that level may be part-time."

The speculation about Beardsley moving to Fulham has continued unabated since Keegan took over at Craven Cottage and he does not deny he is keeping abreast of their progress. A transfer there,

though, would be purely as a player. "Obviously, because of Kevin, I take an interest," he said.

"Because of him and Ray Wilkins and Arthur Cox, that will be a special place and who is to say that, two years down the line, I could not go there and play. But Colin Todd has told me there is nothing happening and, if that's the case, that's fine. I'm happy with that."

When the time comes to get off those blue seats, Beardsley's eight-year-old son, Drew, runs over. "Unfortunately, he's desperate to be a goalkeeper," Beardsley said with a smile, "but we will knock that out of him. He still loves Newcastle."

If son is like father, that latter preference may prove harder to reverse.

Albion jokers cross boredom threshold

FOOTBALLERS like to amuse themselves with jolly japes, essentially to break up the tedium of overnight stays or too many afternoons with nothing to do. West Bromwich Albion's finest are no exception and the pranksters were out in force on the recent trip to Portsmouth.

Lee Hughes, the rookie professional, was the particular butt of many jokes, although he apparently failed to understand why the sign "Mensa Headquarters" had been pinned to his bedroom door. David Smith, the midfielder player, was also vaguely bemused to receive the waitress-served present of a custard pie with a cherry on top.

More sensible, perhaps, was the fine handed out to Alan Miller, the goalkeeper. His contribution to the players' pool was for attending a Tony Bennett concert. No mystery there.

E for effort

Many desperate Ireland supporters tried to hoodwink their way into Lansdowne Road for the sell-out World Cup qualifying play-off against Belgium on Wednesday. Most were unsuccessful, including the three back-packers who turned up at the offices of the Football Association of Ire-

land (FAI) and requested press passes. "We want to be football reporters, we're doing work experience and reckon this would be a good game to start," they explained to Brendan McKenna, the FAI media officer. McKenna told them to go away, but they were soon back. "We've got this particular interest in the Belgian team. Would there be any chance of..."

Franz Beckenbauer, the great Germany player and coach, was guest of honour at the annual Football Association of Ireland/Opel awards in Dublin last Sunday. Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager and a former central defender for his country, is not usually star-struck but admitted to a tingle or two as he chatted and had his photograph taken with the great man. "He was one of my heroes," McCarthy mused. "I'd never met him before but I used to model my game on him. I was delighted to meet him; it was two silky centre halves together." Time may have dimmed the memory but can anybody recall "Der Kaiser" dumping an opponent two rows into the main stand and then grinning about it?



Blood simple

In pursuit of mega-fitness to aid survival in the FA Carling Premiership, Coventry City's players recently availed themselves of blood analysis tests. Now they wished they hadn't. Liam Daish, the central defender, has been told to cut out potatoes, bread and sugar (not to mention lager and bitter) and although he has lost 8lb, it has been tough going. Red wine is OK, though, as long as it is imbued by the glass and not the pint.

Revealing all

Having seen the film *The Full Monty*, Ugo Ehiogu, the Aston Villa defender, now fantasises

about turning up at a night-club and "having a go at the old strip routine with a bunch of mates". It is unlikely, though, that brazen Ugo will be displaying any bare-faced cheek around the Midlands. "It would have to be well away from there, somewhere where nobody knows me," he said. "We'd just turn up, wander in and go for it." How would they recognise him, anyway?

Lest we forget

Never let it be said that the FA Premier League, which runs the FA Carling Premiership, is slow in coming forward to support a good cause. The day before the ubiquitous Spice Girls jumped on the bandwagon,

the PL boys announced plans to help out the Poppy Appeal next weekend. All home clubs will be providing facilities for collectors and military vehicle displays as well as printing messages in the programme. Peter Leaver, the PL chief executive, said: "We're proud to be involved in honouring our wartime players and all those who sacrificed so much to maintain the country's independence."

STRANGE BUT TRUE:

Scarborough fly an Italian flag outside the main entrance of the McCain Stadium and wear the blue-and-white colours of the Azzurri, in deference to their kit maker-sponsor, Errea.

Little at pains to quell Villa unrest

By RICHARD HOBSON

BRIAN LITTLE attempted to dispel suggestions of growing discontent within the Aston Villa dressing-room last night by revealing that Savo Milosevic had apologised to Stan Collymore for comments attributed to the Yugoslav in a magazine in his home country.

Milosevic was quoted as saying that Villa had made a mistake in signing Collymore for £7 million, adding: "I thought he was far better... he does not work hard... he has not done any of the things he used to do for Nottingham Forest and Liverpool."

Milosevic telephoned Collymore from Yugoslavia while preparing for the World Cup play-off first-leg tie against Hungary. According to Little, Milosevic told his team-mate that he "did not recall saying anything like that". Little, ruling out disciplinary action, added: "Both are at ease with the situation."

However, he warned his players to choose their words carefully when speaking publicly. Little acknowledged that such articles undermined morale at a time when Villa, who face Chelsea today, are trying to make up for a wretched start in the FA Carling Premiership.

He said: "We are a young side and sometimes things are said in the heat of the moment which are not always meant. At the moment things are going to be blown up because we would be like to be doing better." Supporters may be inclined to agree with the words attributed to Milosevic,

as Collymore has scored just once for Villa and is unlikely to recover from an operation on his sinuses in time to face Athletic Bilbao in the UEFA Cup second round, second leg on Tuesday.

Paulo Wanchope has become the first Derby County player to win the Carling Player of the Month award after being voted the top performer for October. The 21-year-old Costa Rica international, who cost Derby £600,000 from CS Herdiano in March, scored his third goal of the season in October, against Manchester United, and set up three others.

"Paulo has brought a new dimension to the Derby front line," Glenn Hoddle, the England coach and a member of the Carling No 1 Awards Panel, said.

The manager award was won by Alex Ferguson, of Manchester United, giving him his sixth prize — more than any other Premiership manager.

Alec McGivian, the head of England's World Cup bid, flew home yesterday convinced that hopes of securing the 2006 showpiece had been boosted by eight days of transatlantic lobbying. Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, Sir Bobby Charlton and Graham Kelly, the Football Association chief executive, also travelled to the United States, Trinidad and Tobago and Costa Rica to put England's case to three members of the key FIFA executive committee. McGivian said: "The trip exceeded all our expectations."

Bradford determined to capitalise on their reprieve

By NICK SZCZEPANIK

WHEN Bradford City, who avoided relegation from the Nationwide League first division on the final day of last season, shot out of the blocks at the beginning of this campaign, few expected Chris Kamara's team to sustain anything like promotion form, especially after a heavy defeat at Charlton in mid-September. The bubble had, surely, burst.

Yet the game today at the Pulse Stadium, when Bradford, still comfortably placed in fifth, entertain West Bromwich Albion, in fourth

spot, is undeniably the division's match of the day. Bradford will be satisfied with a repeat of the 1-0 victory against Crewe Alexandra last Saturday, with a goal scored by Edinho, the Brazilian forward signed from Guimaraes of Portugal last February, whose five goals last season helped to keep the Yorkshire side up.

Albion, having become the first team to beat Sheffield United in a league game this term, will be in an equally confident mood. Ray Harford, the manager, has named an unchanged team, with Lee Hughes,

who scored against Sheffield, remaining as a substitute. The reaction of Sheffield to their first defeat will be under scrutiny in their home game against Tranmere Rovers and the same applies to Nottingham Forest, the leaders, after their 3-3 draw at Reading last Friday.

David Bassett, the Forest manager, keeps faith with the side that could have put the game beyond Reading early on, had it not been for what some are already calling the "miss of the season" from Steve Stone. Crewe, their opponents at the City Ground today, will also be unchanged, Dario

Gradi retaining his three-forward formation despite a midweek defeat against Manchester City, for whom George Kinkladze may play, away to Oxford United, with 30 stitches in a back injury received in a car accident.

The momentum, however, is with Middlesbrough, who took third place with their victory over Huddersfield Town, the bottom club, on Tuesday. Nevertheless, a trip to Wolverhampton Wanderers without three central defenders, Pearson, Festa and Vickers, will test their mettle. Neil Maddison, signed for £250,000 from Southampton, may get an earlier

chance than expected to demonstrate his versatility.

Elsewhere, Barry Fry takes Peterborough United, the leaders, to third-placed Exeter City in the third division, while rumours of a playing return for Ray Wilkins, the Fulham manager, are exaggerated — as yet. After turning out in Franco Baresi's testimonial on Wednesday, Wilkins said: "Milan was fantastic fun — an unforgettable night. Who knows if I'll play again for Fulham? If we get a major crop of injuries, I might have a walk." Fulham entertain Chesterfield in the second division today.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Chilling time in the Arctic made Ruud lose his cool

As I left for Norway with my bags packed with gloves, hats and woolly jumpers, I told my children that I was going to visit Father Christmas in the Arctic Circle, and there was a make-believe quality about Chelsea's trip to Tromsø from start to finish.

I am sure it did not seem a laughing matter at the time, with the manager fuming on the touchline, but looking back now I cannot help but smile at the whole farcical affair. We even had a few jokes on the pitch. I remember crashing to the ground and injuring my shoulder after a challenge from their bulky centre forward.

As I lay in the snow, he bent down with a big grin and asked me if I would like an ice pack for the pain. We also had a good chuckle

at the sight of Celestine Babayaro after a sliding tackle in the second half. By the time he got up, my Nigerian team-mate looked as though he had been through the wash and come out white from head to toe.

Maybe it would not be so easy to laugh now if Gianluca Vialli had not scored that late goal. Pulling us back to 3-2 has made a huge difference and while it will not be easy, as we have seen, we can be confident about the second leg at Stamford Bridge on Thursday with the crowd behind us.

I still cannot quite believe we played at all because with the wind and snow in our faces in the second half it was like skiing in a blizzard without goggles. The official insisted that Uefa's busy schedule did not allow time to

rearrange it. Seeing as the next round is not until March, I am not quite sure how he worked that one out.

I hope that game helped end the misconception some people have about foreign players not being able to withstand those sorts of conditions, as if Italians and French have never seen cold weather. They should try playing in Milan or Lens on a freezing January night. Ruud Gullit told us afterwards that he was proud of the way we had responded and I believe we coped well in very trying circumstances.

That is certainly the angriest I have ever seen our manager and I think it was because he felt things had been taken out of his control. The outstanding quality about Ruud is that he has a serenity that



FRANK LEOEUF

seems to stem from being utterly aware of events as they unfold — or even before they happen. I swear he knew we were going to win the FA Cup last year three months before we did.

In Norway, suddenly, everything was ripped from his grasp. His careful plans were torn apart because we could not play the game the way he had told us. It was only by abandoning the good football that was getting us nowhere in the first half and playing a rubbish style that we fought our way back into the game, but that is not the manager's way and that is

why he was so understandably frustrated. On Thursday, we hope not only to win, but also to show the football we know we are capable of.

The Tromsø farce was not the only time that Ruud has lost his temper recently, and the second time it was the players who suffered. For all his cool image, there are so many responsibilities on a football manager that he cannot always be so laid back and he certainly let us know he was less than impressed after our 1-0 defeat at Bolton last week.

Although there were individual

mistakes that saw us miss so many chances, he told us not to look for scapegoats because we were all guilty. We had to look at ourselves and say whether each of us had given their best. Ruud, as the world knows, is a football legend and, when he talks, you are mad not to listen.

Debate over referees

The way people have been talking about referees this week you would think it was just an English problem. Believe me, it is not. The same debate is carried on in Spain, Italy, France and every other country in Europe, if not the world, and that only emphasises the point that it is time to find a universal solution: make them all professional.

I was watching a video the other day of the World Cup quarter-final between England and West Germany in 1970 and I could not believe how slow the game was and the time and space for players. Football has speeded up so much in the past few decades it is amazing, and I think it is essential that the resources are put in to help referees keep pace with that.

With the vast amounts of money that football generates these days, surely there are the resources to fund professional referees. The extra time would allow them to train properly and study the game, perhaps with players at clubs,

which would benefit everyone. It is time Fifa acted.

A home at last

Today, at last, I move into my own house. As I wrote in my first column, hotel life was driving my family and me mad and it will be such a relief tonight when I can come back from Chelsea's game at Aston Villa and walk through my own front door and relax in my own living room.

We are moving to a beautiful home in South West London near parkland and the Thames, which will be such a relief for my two young children after they were cooped up in Knightsbridge. I will have one particular memory of living in that area, though, and that was being near the heart of the capital as the country mourned Princess Diana.

When I moved to England, one of my biggest ambitions was to meet her because she was a woman I had enormous respect for, a princess for many people around the world and not just this country. It is a great sadness to me that the only time I came close to her was at midnight the day after she died. I happened to be driving through London and was held up by the cortege moving her coffin to St James's Palace.

Next week: McNamaman's World

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

(Last week's position in brackets)	PLAYED	POINTS	GOAL DIFF.	HOME					AWAY					LAST 10 MATCHES W-D-L	CURRENT STANDING
				W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
1. MANCHESTER UTD (3)	12	25	+17	5	1	0	17	3	2	3	1	6	3	5-4-1	W1
2. ARSENAL (1)	12	24	+17	4	2	0	15	1	2	4	0	12	9	5-5-0	D2
3. BLACKBURN ROVERS (2)	12	23	+12	3	2	1	13	7	3	3	0	9	3	4-5-1	D1
4. LEICESTER CITY (5)	12	21	+6	3	3	1	11	7	3	0	2	5	3	4-3-3	W1
5. CHELSEA (4)	11	19	+10	3	0	1	8	5	3	1	3	17	10	6-1-3	L1
6. LIVERPOOL (9)	11	18	+8	4	0	1	14	5	1	3	2	6	7	5-2-3	W1
7. DERBY COUNTY (6)	11	17	+4	3	2	0	11	4	2	0	4	8	11	5-2-3	L1
8. LEEDS UTD (7)	12	17	+2	2	1	3	6	7	3	1	2	9	6	4-1-5	L1
9. WIMBLEDON (11)	12	16	+1	2	2	3	7	7	2	2	1	7	6	4-2-4	W1
10. NEWCASTLE UTD (10)	9	16	-1	4	1	1	7	5	1	0	2	2	5	5-1-3	D1
11. WEST HAM UTD (8)	12	16	-3	4	0	1	10	4	1	1	5	6	15	3-1-6	L1
12. CRYSTAL PALACE (14)	12	15	-2	0	2	3	3	8	4	1	2	9	6	3-3-4	W1
13. ASTON VILLA (13)	12	14	-5	2	1	2	6	9	2	1	4	6	8	4-2-4	D1
14. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (12)	12	13	-5	3	2	1	7	6	0	2	4	4	10	3-4-3	L1
15. COVENTRY CITY (15)	12	13	-5	2	5	0	8	6	0	2	3	0	7	1-7-2	D1
16. EVERTON (16)	11	12	-3	3	1	2	11	9	0	2	3	2	7	3-3-4	D1
17. BOLTON WANDERERS (19)	11	11	-6	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	7	13	1-5-4	W1
18. SOUTHAMPTON (20)	12	10	-9	3	1	3	9	9	0	0	5	2	11	3-1-6	W1
19. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (17)	12	9	-12	2	1	3	8	12	0	2	4	9	17	2-3-5	L2
20. BARNLEY (18)	12	9	-26	2	0	4	5	14	1	0	5	4	21	2-0-8	L1

ATTACK		
Goals scored	Avg	
1. Chelsea	25	2.27
2. Arsenal	27	2.25
3. Manchester Utd	22	1.92
4. Blackburn	23	1.91
5. Derby	19	1.83
6. Liverpool	20	1.82
7. Sheffield Wed	17	1.42
8. Leeds	15	1.25
9. Leicester	16	1.33
= West Ham	16	1.33
11. Everton	19	1.19
12. Wimbledon	14	1.17
13. Aston Villa	12	1.00
= Crystal Palace	12	1.00
15. Newcastle m29	9	1.00
16. Southampton	11	0.92
= Tottenham	11	0.92
18. Bolton	9	0.82
19. Barnsley	9	0.75
20. Coventry	8	0.67

SCORING TRENDS		
Goals per half	1st	2nd
1. Arsenal	17	10
2. Aston Villa	5	7
3. Barnsley	5	4
4. Blackburn	17	5
5. Bolton	5	4
6. Chelsea	13	12
7. Coventry	5	3
8. Crystal Palace	6	6
9. Derby	10	9
10. Everton	4	9
11. Leeds Utd	12	3
12. Leicester	5	11
13. Liverpool	5	15
14. Manchester Utd	10	13
15. Newcastle	5	4
16. Sheffield Wed	6	11
17. Southampton	2	9
18. Tottenham	6	5
19. West Ham	4	12
20. Wimbledon	4	10

SCORERS		
Leading scorers by club		
1. Arsenal	Bergkamp	10
2. Aston Villa	Yorker/Taylor	3
3. Barnsley	Redfern	4
4. Blackburn	Sutton	10
5. Bolton	Blake	3
6. Chelsea	Poyet/Vialli	4
7. Coventry	Dublin	4
8. Crystal Palace	Lombardo	3
9. Derby	Balano	8
10. Everton	Cadumartini	4
11. Leeds Utd	Wallace	5
12. Leicester	4 players on 3	
13. Liverpool	Fowler	5
14. Manchester Utd	Cole	5
15. Newcastle	3 players on 2	
16. Sheffield Wed	Carbone	7
17. Southampton	Davies	4
18. Tottenham	Ferdinand	3
19. West Ham	Hartson	7
20. Wimbledon	Cott	4

CAUTIONS		
Cards issued	Yellow	Red
1. Leeds Utd	28	1
2. Arsenal	26	1
3. West Ham	27	0
4. Bolton	23	3
5. C. Palace	26	0
6. Chelsea	22	3
7. Everton	23	2
8. Coventry	24	1
9. Tottenham	22	1
10. Blackburn	20	2
= Sheffield Wed	20	2
12. Southampton	21	0
13. Manchester Utd	20	0
= Derby	20	0
15. Liverpool	18	0
= Wimbledon	18	0
17. Barnsley	17	0
18. Leicester	15	0
19. Newcastle	13	1
20. Aston Villa	9	1

REFEREES			
		Cards issued	
		P	Yellow Red
1.	S Dunn	4	24 1
2.	P Durkin	7	34 2
3.	G Willard	7	33 2
4.	G Ashby	5	23 1
5.	P Alcock	5	22 0
6.	M Reed	4	16 1
7.	D Ellery	6	23 1
8.	M Bodenham	6	24 0
9.	G Barber	6	22 1
10.	U Rennie	6	23 0
11.	G Poll	8	26 3
12.	J Winter	7	24 1
13.	M Riley	6	18 1
14.	P Jones	7	19 2
15.	N Barry	6	17 0
16.	A Wilkie	7	17 1
17.	K Burge	6	15 0
18.	D Gallagher	7	15 1
19.	S Lodge	7	14 0

DEFENCE		
Goals conceded	Avg	
1. Manchester Utd	6	0.50
2. Arsenal	10	0.83
= Blackburn	10	0.83
= Leicester	10	0.83
5. Coventry	13	1.08
= Leeds	13	1.08
= Wimbledon	13	1.08
8. Liverpool	12	1.00
9. Newcastle	10	1.17
10. Crystal Palace	14	1.17
11. Tottenham	18	1.50
12. Bolton	15	1.25
= Chelsea	15	1.25
= Derby	15	1.25
15. Aston Villa	17	1.42
16. Everton	16	1.33
17. West Ham	19	1.58
18. Southampton	20	1.67
19. Sheffield Wed	29	2.42
20. Barnsley	35	2.92

CLEAN SHEETS		
Clean sheet	Failed to score	
1. Arsenal	6	3
2. Aston Villa	4	5
3. Barnsley	2	6
4. Blackburn	6	2
5. Bolton	4	4
6. Chelsea	4	1
7. Coventry	5	6
8. Crystal Palace	3	5
9. Derby	2	3
10. Everton	3	4
11. Leeds Utd	3	4
12. Leicester	3	1
13. Liverpool	6	3
14. Manchester Utd	4	1
15. Newcastle	2	1
16. Sheffield Wed	2	6
17. Southampton	4	6
18. Tottenham	1	3
19. West Ham	1	3
20. Wimbledon	2	4

HOME		
Attendance	Average	% full
1. Arsenal	37,948	99%
2. Aston Villa	35,143	89%
3. Barnsley	18,378	99%
4. Blackburn	23,089	74%
5. Bolton	23,966	96%
6. Chelsea	31,985	95%
7. Coventry	18,390	78%
8. Crystal Palace	22,379	85%
9. Derby	22,140	74%
10. Everton	36,397	91%
11. Leeds	36,042	90%
12. Leicester	20,429	95%
13. Liverpool	35,844	94%
14. Manchester Utd	55,100	98%
15. Newcastle	36,692	100%
16. Sheffield Wed	24,401	61%
17. Southampton	15,188	100%
18. Tottenham	26,082	79%
19. West Ham	25,305	97%
20. Wimbledon	16,511	63%

AWAY		
Attendance	P	Average
1. Arsenal	6	23,163
2. Aston Villa	7	28,449
3. Barnsley	6	30,383
4. Blackburn	6	26,129
5. Bolton	6	21,773
6. Chelsea	7	29,310
7. Coventry	5	30,007
8. Crystal Palace	7	27,098
9. Derby	6	27,480
10. Everton	6	26,182
11. Leeds	5	23,518
12. Leicester	6	25,299
13. Liverpool	6	29,557
14. Manchester Utd	6	30,438
15. Newcastle	3	32,427
16. Sheffield Wed	6	25,613
17. Southampton	5	30,686
18. Tottenham	6	26,589
19. West Ham	7	28,544
20. Wimbledon	5	29,615

INTERNET		
FA Premiership clubs' official websites		
Arsenal	www.arsenal.co.uk	
Aston Villa	www.astonvillafc.co.uk	
Barnsley	www.barnsleyfc.co.uk	
Blackburn	www.blackburnfc.co.uk	
Bolton	www.boltonfc.co.uk	
Chelsea	www.chelseafc.co.uk	
Coventry	www.coventryfc.co.uk	
C. Palace	www.cpalace.co.uk	
Derby	www.derbyfc.co.uk	
Everton	www.evertonfc.co.uk	
Leeds	www.leedsfc.co.uk	
Leicester	www.leicesterfc.co.uk	
Liverpool	www.liverpoolfc.co.uk	
Man Utd	www.manutd.co.uk	
Newcastle	www.newcastle-utd.co.uk	
Sheff Wed	www.sheffwed.co.uk	
Southampton	www.soton.ac.uk/~sants	
Tottenham	www.tottenham.co.uk	
West Ham	www.westhamunited.co.uk	
Wimbledon	www.wimbledonfc.co.uk	
FA Premiership	www.fa-premiership.com	

WEEKEND MATCHES

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By SYDNEY FRISKIN

coach, will be in charge of all the England matches.

**FROM JULIAN MUSCAT
TENNIS CORRESPONDENT
IN PARIS**

A poor showing in Hanover may prompt Rusedski to re-



Rusedski could certainly have won this match. His forehand volley, lamentable at the start, troubled him for much of the contest. Kafel-

Curious is the only way to describe the frequency with which Richard Krajicek withdraws in mid-tournament. A successful run in Stuttgart last

By MARK SOUSTER

London Irish, though, will be cock-a-hoop after upsetting Wasps last Sunday.

It is also the third round of the Tetley's Bitter Cup, with some intriguing ties in prospect — not least Orrell versus Newbury, Wakefield against Morley and Lydney's match with London Scottish. The draw for the fourth round, in which the Premiership first division teams enter, is made on Monday.



Today

West Witley.

...and Pellety Plates (5.30).

What can we do for you?

CABLE & WIRELESS

What can we do for you?

RUGBY UNION

Pontypridd prepare for brief encounter

BY MARK SOUSTER

A CASUAL glance at the three qualifying matches for the quarter-finals of the Heineken Cup suggests that the sides enjoying home advantage in the play-off matches this afternoon will reach the last eight. Apart from the obvious difficulty in winning away, there are other pressing criteria that indicate success for Leicester, Cardiff and Brive against Glasgow, Llanelli and Pontypridd.

Pontypridd return to France for their third Brive encounter this season derided by injuries, the further loss of Dale McIntosh, Phil John and André Barnard, who have been banned from the town at the behest of a local magistrate, and a subsequent dip in form that, in the circumstances, is understandable. Taken in isolation, any one of these factors would make what is already a tall order against the reigning champions even more difficult. Taken collectively, Pontypridd would appear not to have a prayer.

John accepted that the odds are against an upset, but added: "We have shown in the past that Europe's best do not frighten us, having beaten Bath last season and drawn with Brive at Sardis Road. As long as the forwards provide us with a platform, I would fancy our chances of scoring tries against anyone."

In the light of their now infamous brawl and its fallout, Pontypridd will be in and out of the town itself in a day. "We will be staying outside the region in Limoges, driving to the ground on Saturday morning, play the game, shower and get out again," Eddie Jones, the manager, said.

Apart from longstanding injuries to Kevin Morgan and David Manley, Pontypridd will play Crispin Cormack for the first time this season if Gareth Wyatt does not recover from a shoulder injury. With the exception of Lisandro Artizu, who plays for Argentina against Australia in Buenos Aires, a star-studded Brive are at full strength, their side containing seven internationals, among them Christophe Lamaison and Philippe Carboneau, who were injured in the post-match fracas, and Alain Penard, the captain.

With Cardiff and Llanelli meeting in front of a capacity 12,000 crowd at the Arms Park, Wales is guaranteed a representative in the last eight. It is likely to be Cardiff, given that Llanelli have one eye on New Zealand, whom they are scheduled to meet next Saturday, the same day as the quarter-finals are due to be held. "Home advantage should work in our favour, but we lost to Llanelli at the Arms Park last year and it all boils down to who performs on the day," Jonathan Humphreys, the captain of Cardiff, said.

With Mike Hall absent, Simon Hill moves to centre and Craig Morgan, 18, makes his full debut. Having recovered from an arm injury, Frano Botica returns for Llanelli but at inside centre, rather than fly half, where Craig Warlow is preferred.

Kevin Greene will be in charge of Glasgow for the final time if, as expected, they lose at Leicester. Greene, in tandem with Tommy Hayes, the fly half, has done wonders in taking the Scottish district this far. "The players should be proud of what they have already achieved, but now they must ensure they give it everything against Leicester," Greene said.

"We are out-and-out underdogs, but we must try to get enough quality possession from the set-piece to enable James Craig and Derek Stark to show what they can do." Glasgow recall after injury Iain Sinclair, the Scotland Under-21 open-side flanker, Murray Wallace is injured, but Fergus, his brother, continues in the back row.

Bob Dwyer continues to ring the changes at Leicester. Darren Garforth is dropped, Graham Rowntree moves to tight-head prop and Perry Freshwater comes in at loose head. Waisale Scerivi and Austin Healey are again at scrum half and right wing respectively for a match likely to prove a painful experience for the Scots.

Wasps' qualities provide key to success when England take on the strongest international opposition

Leading from the front for club and country

I take losing very personally. In that respect, I wasn't the best person to be around on Sunday evening after Wasps had lost to London Irish. The possibility of captaining England was the last thing on my mind, but, 24 hours later, Clive Woodward had asked me to do the job, which represents quite a pick-me-up.

People have commented on the potential difficulties of captaining club and country, but I believe that they complement each other. I want Wasps to be successful: the challenge for us, at club level, is to continue the success of last season and develop the quality of what is a very young side. If we — and players at other clubs — are playing well, that is good news for England, because the management wants to have problems in selection, caused by the quality of performance by every squad member.

At Wasps I have been part of a very structured, very successful and co-operative set-up and I have been able to lean on those resources. That is what England are trying to establish. Clive has

surrounded himself with an excellent team that includes three of the best club coaches and specialists such as Phil Keith-Roach, for scrummaging, and Dave Alfred, for kicking. Each individual has a valued part to play.

Similarly, tactical awareness is something that comes with experience. I have only two eyes and two ears: there are other eyes and ears on the pitch and I am always prepared to listen. The key is to be flexible. One of the best assets any individual can possess is the ability to absorb what others say, select what is valuable and discard what you believe is not. In doing so, the decision you arrive at should be better balanced and, I hope, the right one.

The last thing that I want to do is separate the captain from the rest of the team. He may be at the forefront of the increasing profile of the game in England, but the whole England squad is moving upwards; the more successful we are, the more we will continue to grow into the public awareness. Look at the captaincy situation with the England football team,

which is on such a high at the moment: the responsibility has passed between various people — Shearer, Ince, Adams, Seaman — but everyone is happy.

We are all in this together. We must be as collective as possible, so that everyone buys into what we are all trying to achieve. I appreciate, too, that there will be extra demands on the captain's time, but that boils down to management. There are only 24 hours in each day and you have to use that time to best effect. Nobody should forget that it is the rugby that has taken you forward in the first place. You have to be a rugby player first, a celebrity second and there have been play-

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO



ers who seem to have lost sight of that in the past. You have to retain the ability to say no, to be as disciplined off the pitch as you should be on it.

Considering that I picked up a yellow card in the game with London Irish, some people may query that last remark. To be honest, I'm not too sure what the warning was for — it may be that the referee had heard enough from our players complaining about his regulation of the scrums and that this was a general warning to me as captain. It was a match in which our consistency and intelligence let us down and we must take the opportunity against Sale tomorrow to pick ourselves up.

The fact that Wasps have lost two games in a row means that I cannot afford to have even one eye on the Heineken Cup play-off today. We play the winners next weekend and many people assume that it will be Brive. All I would say is that I believe Pontypridd will be galvanised by the outcome of the judicial investigation and that, whoever wins, I'm glad we are at home.

Those qualities I expect from Wasps must become integral to England if we are to be successful. The four internationals that are now coming so near are an extreme challenge in rugby terms and our objective is to get an idea of which individuals can and cannot operate at this level, against three of the best teams in the world. It will give us all the information we need about the back-to-back intensity required to beat the best and, by December 6, after we have played New Zealand for the second time, we will know how we shape up.

The most significant game is the

first one. It would be only too easy to allow New Zealand to overshadow Australia and South Africa, but that would be disrespectful to the other two countries. The last time we took the field was against Australia, in Sydney, and we came off second-best. We have no cause to overlook the qualities of the Australia side, whom we play first, on November 15.

We do have two advantages, though. One is the core of experienced players upon whom we can call, with whom we can blend the youthful talent that has brought down the average age of the squad so significantly. The other is the fact that our opponents do not know what our team will be. We know how much competition there is for places, while we also know how well English players fitted into the different playing patterns laid down by the British Isles in the summer.

The likes of Sean Fitzpatrick, John Eales and Gary Teichmann may arrive in England believing there to be a certain predictability about our play — I hope that we can scotch that notion.



McIntosh, frustrated at not being able to play at Brive today because he is forbidden to return to the region while under investigation, draws comfort from the close-knit community in which he lives

A loose translation of Ynysybwl might be "isle among the pits". The remains of the mining industry lie all around the Rhondda Valley but for Dale McIntosh, the pits have taken on a more McEnroeque meaning — this has not been a good year but at least his home in Ynysybwl, the little village just outside Pontypridd, has long been a haven for him.

Under normal circumstances McIntosh would have been preparing today for Pontypridd's game against Brive, the Heineken Cup holders, in the French town's Municipal Stadium. But the meetings this season between the clubs have been tarnished by the violent confrontations that attended their first game, on September 14, and by what followed.

McIntosh, the black-haired, softly-spoken New Zealander, is central to the subsequent unhappy history over the past seven weeks. He was sent off midway through the first game after a mass brawl and, as he left the field, made a series of thumbs-up gestures to the crowd that were subsequently judged sufficiently inflammatory for European Rugby Cup Ltd (ERC) officials to arraign him on a charge of bringing the game into disrepute (for which he received an admonishment).

Worse, he was one of three Pontypridd players to be named in an affair in Le Bar Toulzac later that same evening, which left

several Brive players claiming injuries that kept them out of the next cup game. That incident remains the subject of a legal investigation in France and, until that is completed, French law forbids McIntosh, Phil John and André Barnard from returning to the Corrèze region — hence their absence from the game today.

McIntosh feels the blow more keenly than most. This is no itinerant rugby player, no mercenary, but a man who arrived in Pontypridd as a teenager and has put down roots. "Any other village in Wales than Ynysybwl and I might have been back in New Zealand now," he said. "I enjoyed the camaraderie on the field but the warmth of the welcome in the village was second to none. They are such genuine people, it was like

DAVID HANDS



Pontypridd's New Zealander reflects on violent events that scarred his reputation

finding a New Zealand community in the heart of Wales."

McIntosh, the youngest of three brothers, comes from another small community, Turangi, to the south of Lake Taupo in New Zealand's North Island. He used the money gained after being made redundant from a power-station project to travel the world and wound up at Pontypridd on the advice of Garin Jenkins and Ceri Jones, then the Pontypridd captain, both of whom were playing at McIntosh's club, Taupo. For all his ambitions to wear the silver fern of his own country, the young New Zealander took to his new environment like a duck to water.

His name was soon carried to the ears of the Scotland selectors — his grandfather came from Perth — for whose under-21, B and A teams he played. But the constant travel and the growing identification with Wales turned his thoughts closer to home: he married Nicola, an Ynysybwl girl, and the birth of his son, Dion (now four with a 16-month-old sister, Tani) cemented the relationship with his adopted country.

Few players can have served a longer period of residential qualification before winning international honours. When McIntosh arrived in Wales the requirement was six years but a change in the regulations left him with a further two to go. Eight days after he had finally satisfied the regulations, Wales picked him in their back row against South Africa last December.

Four days later he broke his jaw; he recovered in time to play against

England, then broke his arm — for a fifth time — and missed the summer tour to North America. Adding to his worries this year has been the possibility of legal action over a nightclub incident. How easy it is to portray McIntosh, now 27, as just another sportsman imbued with an over-aggressive streak, rather than a technically well-equipped player brought up to compete to the edge in what can be the hardest of team sports.

At the other extreme there is McIntosh, the worker for charity, the player who spends hours talking to children in deprived areas, signing autographs. There is McIntosh the local hero, nicknamed "Chief". "I would like to say that it was because my forebears included a great Maori warrior but it's because I'm supposed to look like a character with that name from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*," McIntosh said.

He is proud of his Maori background, from his mother's side of the family, but it contributes to a potent mix that makes McIntosh the character he is. He is happy to observe that he has not been sent off or sin-binned in a long career

before September 14 but admits that a chapter of three incidents, on and off the field, arrived one on top of the other. "Anyone who knows me will back what I say, that Dale McIntosh isn't a violent person," he said.

"The one thing I try to stress to kids is that violence is wrong. They saw me on television, coming off the pitch at Brive and they say 'hey, you gave them a few dukes' but the first thing I explain is that that's not the way forward and that what I did was totally wrong."

"I'm lucky that video evidence shows it was retaliation, that I didn't provoke any of it. People don't want a thug involved in charity work."

"But it wasn't a one-sided thing. We don't condone violence but we had to stand our corner. Yes, we are an aggressive side, that's the way you have to be in this game, it's part of the winning formula, but by no means are we a dirty side."

"But our name was ridiculed before any evidence came out. It has lightened a bit since but there's been no apology, no nothing. I hope now that it's water under the bridge. We bear no animosity towards anyone. All we want to do is get out on the pitch and play rugby."

This afternoon, for the third time this season, Pontypridd and Brive will attempt to do just that and McIntosh, at home on his "island", will feel every tackle the more because he is not there.



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THE NEW MILLENNIUM WATCH
THE NEW CENTENARY FACETED WATCH



Broken bones collected in an afternoon's futile pursuit of National Hunt glory reflect a typically bad day at the office

Losers who revel in the thrill of the chase

Why do they do it? The personal question of National Hunt racing. They ride, in the phrase of Surtees, as if they each had a spare neck in their pockets. They ride horses of a deep and powerful doggedness, soiled, slow and half-schooled. They accept small injuries like broken bones as nothing more than a poor day at the office. They swing a leg over a horse knowing that each ride could be their last. And they do it for two pence a time. When they don't get offered horses to ride, or when there are not very many horses running because the ground is too hard, light now, or when there is no racing because the ground is frozen, there is no money coming in.

And sometimes they can't ride because they have a head ringing with concussion, or they have broken a collar-bone, and they are losing rides, and worse, good rides. As they wait for bones to knit, they know that someone fitter is stealing their horses and their trainers and their owners. And all the time they wait for the injury that will end their career as a National Hunt jockey.

Why do they do it? Well, I shall tell you precisely why they do it a little later. But, meanwhile, to Guy

Lewis, who rode in 141 races last season. And that produced the grand total of... five winners. He had to pull up 21 of these runners, mostly because they couldn't keep up with the other horses.

It was a ghastly year, a year out of a nightmare. Lewis grumbles — grumbling is an inalienable human

SIMON BARNES Talking horse



right — but he never complains. In fact, give him half a chance, more than he usually gets on a horse, and he will start talking about the best job in the world. Why do they do it?

I repeat, all shall be revealed in due course. But more on Lewis. To Win Just Once: The Life of a Journeyman Jockey, his diary of the season from hell — that is to say, a routine season in the life of any jockey out of the top dozen — has just been published. I am inclined to predict success.

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Your true National Hunt follower infinitely prefers the "gaff" tracks — Kelsa, Hedham, Towcester — to the big days at



Lewis looks on the bright side at his home in Gwent after winning just five times in 141 races last year. His exploits are chronicled in a diary of his season from hell

Cheltenham and Sandown Park. He likes the trainers who stay in the game regardless of economic sense. And, above all, he admires the journeyman jocks who bring him his sport and, just sometimes, ride his money home.

There are getting on for 200 of them, all scrambling about for the same rides, all of them caught in the same trap. If you don't get the rides on the fast horses, you won't win races. And if you are not winning races, no one will give you a ride on one of the fast horses.

In National Hunt riding you are either at the top or on the bottom. If you have a hundred winners under your belt, trainers and owners will fight for your services. If you have five — well, you don't unplug the phone before you go to bed.

Lewis's book is a loser within a loser within a horror story. His collaborator, Sean Magee, seeing

that the tale of a journeyman jock would be right up the National Hunt alley, arranged to do the book with a jockey called Richard Davis. The name will send a chill through those who follow the sport closely; blank indifference in those who do not.

Davis was, indeed, a journeyman jock. On July 19 last year, he went to Southwell for a single ride on a bad horse: a standard day at the office for your standard journeyman. The horse was called Mr Sox, and it killed him. A bad horse — in the bottom three per cent of the 1,500 horses with ratings over fences — it took a jump all wrong, somersaulted over it and landed on his back with jockey beneath. The book concludes the account of the accident and Davis's death from a lacerated liver with

the sentence: "His estate would receive his fee for riding Mr Sox: £80."

Magee was going to scrap the idea of the book, but he and Lewis, who was a great pal of Davis, decided to do it in Davis's memory. The season turned out to be much worse than either of them had hoped. Lewis, once a boy of huge promise, seemed to be growing into a man for whom luck passed by on the other side. The diary records a season of frustration forever larded with hope and overshadowed by the memory of Davis. And its principal voice sound self-pitying? If so, I do both a grave disservice. There is no resentment of the caprices of fortune, of owners, of trainers that have condemned Lewis to the ranks of the journeyman. And more than that: "We still hadn't shaken off the other horse."

So I rode to the last fence hell for leather and threw What's In Orbit at it as if it were a hurdle, got a couple of lengths and made enough ground to win going away. Brilliant!

Banal, too — but what does that matter? Have you ever thrown a horse at a decent-sized fence as if it were a hurdle? It is like the day you lost your virginity.

National Hunt jockeys have a hard and a brutal life, but they also have free entry to the world's greatest brothel of the senses. The greatest excitement in the world is theirs. What, jockeys complain? Can you imagine a young man complaining about being given a season-ticket to a brothel? And these National Hunt jockeys are paid every time they enter it.

I always remember Ian Stark, the three-day eventer, trying to explain about the joys of throwing a

big horse over a huge jump. "It's better than anything in the world," he said. "Except maybe sex." The significant word in the statement is, of course, "maybe".

National Hunt jockeys have not chosen an easy option. It is a young man's game and soon, for most of them, the risks and the small rewards demand that you be sensible, grow up, get a proper job.

And in a year or two, they look back and agree that they must have been mad: but they never forget the mad joys of the very best of days. Lewis, now 22, has had 30 rides so far this season. And not a single winner. "I'm young and I'm enjoying what I do. I'm not looking forward to the time when I have to do something else."

□ To Win Just Once: The Life of a Journeyman Jockey, by Sean Magee and Guy Lewis (Headline, £16.99).

Hern's career draws to close

THE curtain came down on a remarkable career as Ghabib passed, the post at the end of the listed, James Seymour Stakes at Newmarket yesterday. The Soviet Star colt was the final runner in the 40-year career of Major Dick Hern, a period which has seen him gain remarkable triumph on the racecourse and, moreover, away from it.

Hern trained the winners of 16 British classics, eight Irish classics and two in France. But even more noteworthy have been his personal victories, notably the broken neck he suffered in a hunting accident in December 1984, major heart surgery in 1988, and his dismissal by the Queen in March 1989, two months before Nashwan's victory in the £2,000 Guineas.

Ghabib was sent off the 11-4 favourite to give him a suc-



Hern: overcame adversity

cessful send-off but finished a gallant joint-third with Proper Blue behind John Gosden's Saafya, who beat Sandown Champion by a length.

Having been presented with a bottle of champagne by racecourse chairman Peter Player, Hern said: "I would like to have had my last

runner a winner, but if you want something too much you never get it. It didn't work out and there you are."

"I really can't complain. I have had a long career — I have been training for 40 years and as I wasn't that young when I started, that's not too bad. It is very nice to have my last runner at Newmarket, the finest racecourse in the world. I have enjoyed it all the way."

Looking back at the highs and lows of his career, Hern added: "Obviously Brigadier Gerard was a great horse, but Nashwan winning the 2,000 Guineas was, I think, my best moment in racing, not only at Newmarket, but anywhere. "I think the worst time here was when Gorytus trailed in last in the Dewhurst. He started odds-on and we never got to the bottom of what happened."

THUNDERER	
12.40 Banker Court, 1.10 Speerhead Again, 1.45 Secret Service, 2.20 Simply Dashing, 2.50 Pridwell, 3.25 One Man, 4.00 Stoned Immaculate.	
GOING: GOOD TO FIRM	SIS
12.40 BOLTON PERCY NOVICES HURDLE (53,852; 2m) (5 runners)	
1 ALZET 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
2 GOLDEN THUNDERBOLT 7 (F) 4-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
3 LLOYD OF THE RIVER 5 (F) 4-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
4 LLOYD OF THE RIVER 5 (F) 4-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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9 LLOYD OF THE RIVER 5 (F) 4-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
10 LLOYD OF THE RIVER 5 (F) 4-11-0 A P McCoy 118	

1.10 ARTHUR STEPHENSON NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (54,738; 2m 411yds) (4)	
1 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
2 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
3 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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10 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	

1.45 STANLEY RACING HANDICAP HURDLE (53,444; 2m) (5)	
1 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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10 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	

2.20 PETERHOUSE GROUP HANDICAP CHASE (53,782; 2m 411yds) (4)	
1 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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10 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	

2.50 TOTE WEST YORKSHIRE HURDLE (Grade 1; £11,360; 3m 10yds) (2)	
1 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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3.25 CHARLIE HALL CHASE (Grade 1; £18,390; 3m 10yds) (4)	
1 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
2 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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4.00 WENSLEYDALE JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (Grade 1; £8,955; 2m) (7)	
1 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	
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5.00 WENSLEYDALE JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (Grade 1; £8,955; 2m) (7)	
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10 RYAN 187 J (F) 5-11-0 A P McCoy 118	

Wales can secure Saint-Cloud prize

ASAKIR (Frankie Dettori), Distant Mirage (Olivier Peslier) and Wales (Richard Quinn) represent Britain in the final group event of the French season, the £44,993 Criterion Stakes at Saint-Cloud, over four furlongs today.

Asakir is unbeaten in two starts, while Peter Chapple-Hyam's Distant Mirage got off the mark with a victory at

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Testing time for the ministry of daft ideas

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Age before booty on veterans' big day out

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Rolls clone that's holding Benz back

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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1 1997

Peddling the new laid-back approach

Vaughan Freeman puts his best feet forward to try recumbent cycles



Vision Metro's rear suspension makes it a mobile massage

It seems more armchair than transport, but this curious contraption really is a bicycle. Instead of the traditional riding position, the Vision Metro is a recumbent, and apparently never forgets riding a recumbent—needs literally a laid-back approach.

Instead of perching on a hard little saddle, the recumbent rider reclines in the luxury of a proper seat and can opt for a wind-cheating fairing. Because recumbents are so aerodynamic, they hold all sorts of speed records.

While even a fit keen cyclist struggles to average 20mph, the recumbent biker can cruise at 25mph without difficulty.

But if the two-wheelers look too much like a circus act—and they take some getting used to—there is the option of riding laid-back trikes.

Patrick Shaw quit his financial services job seven years ago and set up shop specialising in recumbents, many of which he imports from America, where they enjoy huge popularity.

Now they are catching on here. Shaw's FutureCycles company in East Sussex even organises weekends for would-be buyers to rent one and try it out in the Whinnie The Pooh countryside of Ashdown Forest.

My first taste of recumbency came aboard a three-wheeler called the Trice. For anyone used to ordinary two-wheelers, the apparent lack of handlebars is most disconcerting. How do you steer?

The bars, sport, horn-like, from the beneath your backside and appear either side of your thighs. The gearshift levers are mounted handily at the end of the bars, with the

brake levers. The left-hand brake stops you, the right hand one is a parking brake. You sit low down and feel almost invisible, waiting for the first truck to flatten you. But the flagpole at the rear, and the fact that it is such a strange-looking beast, mean traffic spots you a mile off.

The Trice is incredibly quick, the drum brakes very effective, and after just 15 minutes or so, even novices are able to turn corners sharply enough to lift one of the front wheels. It is massive fun.

Having mastered the Trice, it was time to try some of the more daunting-looking two-wheelers. First came the Streetglider: pedals

disappearing ahead, two smallish wheels, yards of cycle chain weaving in and out of the frame, and a seat like a Habitat style statement.

You need the knack to get aboard. Hold the seat back, step astride, then let go of the seat and sit down. Gently grip the bars. Get your foot on a pedal, give a huge shove, lift your other foot and you are off... though a bit wobbly.

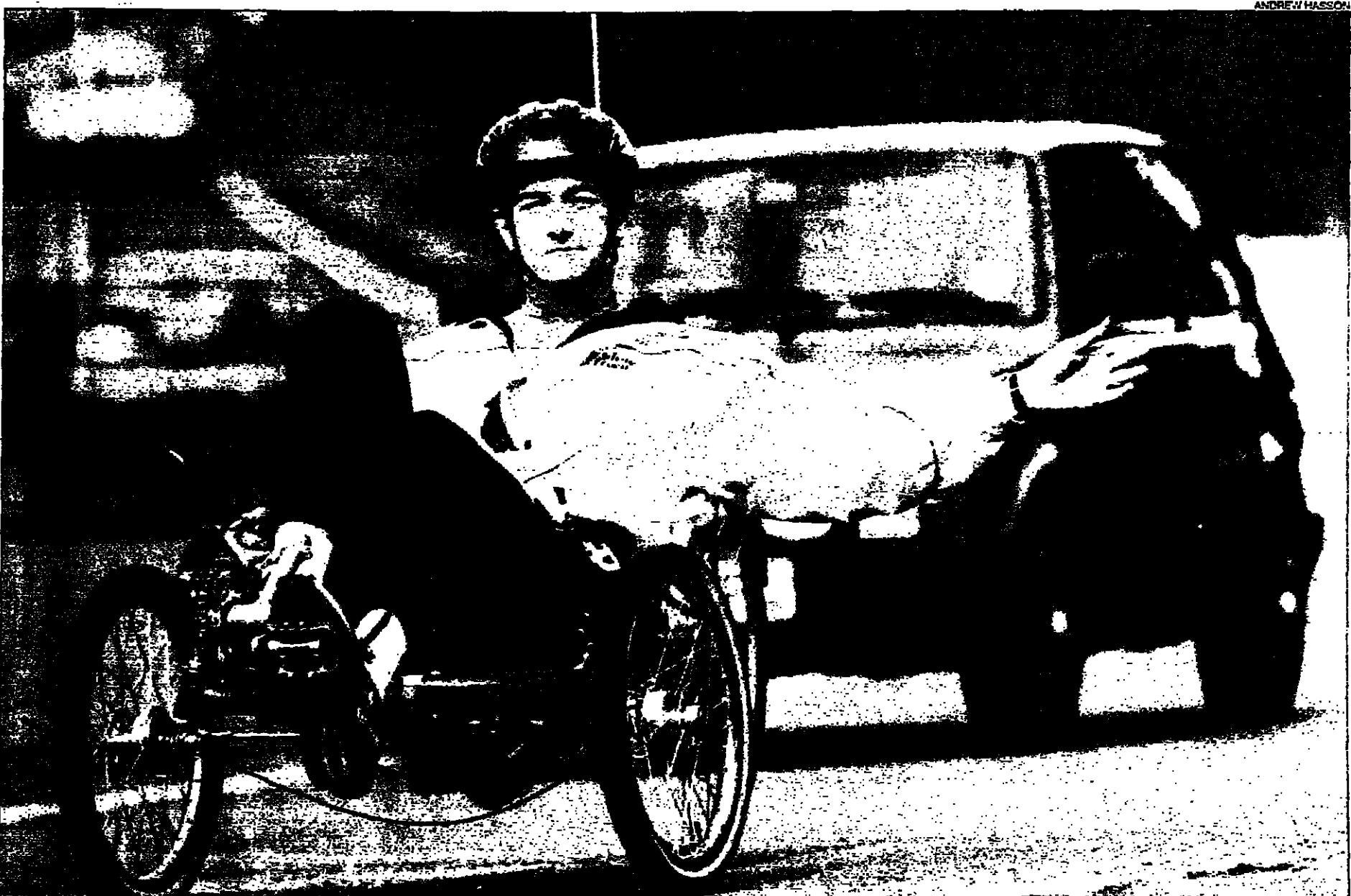
The instinct is to haul on the handlebars beneath you for leverage, but there is no need. The seating position means the rider can generate massive amounts of power, unlike a regular two-wheeler, where

pushing hard just lifts your bottom out of the saddle.

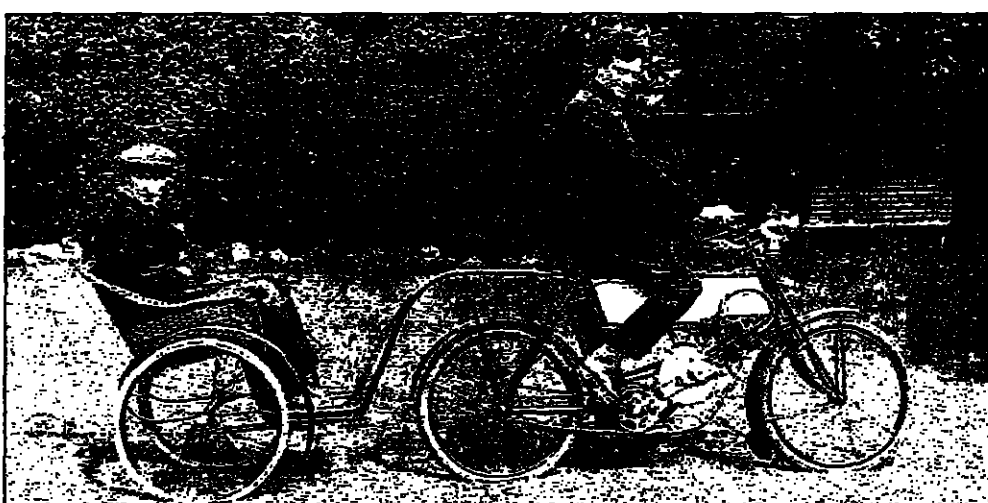
After a few minutes, I had control and was able to weave, stop and take off again without disaster.

For variety I tried the Vision Metro, which has the handlebars on a 3ft-long stem in front, a cross between a child's Seventies "Chopper" cycle and lowrider motorcycle. This was hugely enjoyable, and rear suspension made the whole thing more like a mobile massage than a bicycle.

● The Trice costs from £1,550, the Streetglider from £1,350 and the Vision Metro from £895. FutureCycles is at Friends Yard, London Road, Forest Row, East Sussex. Tel: 01342 822 847



Riders may feel invisible on the low-slung Trice in traffic, but the rear-mounted flag and the machine's strange appearance mean that everyone immediately notices you



BIKE PATH

■ MORE than 100 million cycles are made annually—three times the number of cars

■ CYCLING at least 20 miles a week cuts the risk of heart disease by half

■ AROUND 1.5 million commuter trips are made daily by bicycle

■ TOTAL distance covered annually by cyclists is more than that covered by British Rail and London Underground

■ CAMBRIDGE is Britain's cycle-friendly city: 27 per cent of journeys to work are made on two wheels

■ CYCLE ownership doubled from 1985 to 1995 with the advent of the mountain bike

■ AVERAGE life of a bike is between ten and 12 years

■ PEOPLE use their bikes less today than ten years ago

■ THE ACCIDENT rate for UK cyclists is five times higher than in Holland, with 213 British cyclists killed in 1995

■ MOUNTAIN bikes account for two in three sales, though like 4x4 cars, few ever go near a mountain

WANT TO ride home but can't be bothered pedalling? What you need is an engine on your bike.

Powered bicycles are not new; the first hit the market 100 years ago. And the oldest British car company in continuous production—AC—was founded when engineer John Weller saw his friend John Portwine, a butcher, struggling with deliveries on a boneshaking bike. Weller fitted an engine, and Portwine's pedalling days were numbered. Humber, later famous for cars, was making motor-driven bicycles in 1897 for ladies, with 143cc "clip-on" engines. Pedalling, unfortunately, was not optional but the engine made life easier uphill.

Now Sir Clive Sinclair has launched the Zeita 11, a £95, 12-volt battery and motor to power an ordinary bike to up to 12.5mph without pedalling for almost five miles, just the job for the weary commuter—or a latterday chauffeur struggling to get up a head of steam with Sir in the wicker rear seat.



Zeita: old idea, new form



Past shocks: 1905 electric Humber with hanger-on, top, and 1910 cycle with motor attached

Retro-rockets launch comeback for Motorcycle Show

John Naish rides Kawasaki's big, bold attempt to recapture the Seventies spirit

While we should be looking to the future at next week's Motorcycle Show, the Seventies are, apparently, back. For some years, Japanese makers have tried to revive the style of motorcycle they conquered the world with two decades ago—naked road-bikes with upright riding positions and gunny engines.

But their attempts to sell so-called retros have until now been foiled by the popularity of highly strung modern sportsbikes.

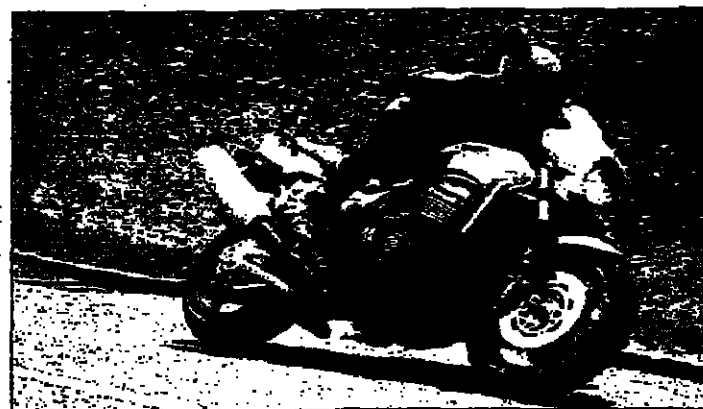
Triumph has shown the Japanese way, however: its Thunderbird has sold well with a friendly detuned engine and Sixties styling. The International Motorcycle Show at Birmingham's NEC sees the British launch of a hot-up version, the Thunderbird Sport.

Now Japanese Seventies-style motorcycling is starting its come-

back, says the Motorcycle Industry Association; proof, it claims, that "motorcyclists use criteria other than outright speed when choosing which model to buy".

The 600cc sector is seeing most interest, with Suzuki's retro-styled Bandit outselling the sportsbike competition. Honda is launching its Hornet 600 retro, and Yamaha the FZS600 Fazer at the show to compete. So far, however, the big-bike market remains uncertain. While the Seventies saw a rush to sell ever more powerful sit-up-and-beg machines such as the archetypal schizoid superbike—Kawasaki's 900cc Z1—most modern riders are reluctant to return to hanging on bolt-upright in the wind.

This has not deterred Kawasaki, which this season launched the ZRX1100 on a wave of nostalgia, hailing it as the spiritual successor



ZRX1100: smooth torque makes for big fun down country lanes

to the original Z1—with 25 years' technological improvements.

Having owned Z1s for the vast majority of my riding career, Kawasaki thought me qualified to spend a week discovering what a quarter-century can do to an old idea. The ZRX feels instantly familiar to anyone who learnt on Seventies bikes; controls fall easily

to hand, the ride feels comfortable and predictable, and markedly more secure than the original thing.

The motor delivers a flood of low-down power that commands respect in first gear: the front wheel lifts with little effort. The low seat and relatively light weight make it a real proposition for women

seeking a litre-plus bike, and the riding position is painless in town. Kawasaki have created added retro-appeal to the muscle-bike image by building it with the type of extras that bomber-jacketed speed freaks used to buy to make their machines look better, go faster and handle adequately: bikini fairing, four-into-one exhaust and braced swingarm.

The motor, a detuned version of the company's top-of-the-range rocket, delivers a torrent of mid-range power: just open the throttle, hold on and smile. At medium-fast speeds the machine is a pleasure, mixing easy handling with good ground clearance.

Whizzing down country roads is pure easy fun, and so long as you prefer to ride at nine-tenths commitment it's a perfect summer blast. Push it to the edge and that twin-shock double-cradle frame betrays its heritage by wallowing slightly: nothing like a Seventies bike, but enough to disappoint race-replica fans.

Power runs out in the upper rev range, and Kawasaki seems to consider this a smart tuning trade-off; the natty fairing does little to keep windblast off the rider, so long high-speed trips are only for the hairiest-chested heroes.

While I greatly enjoyed the machine, Kawasaki is overselling it as a roadburner. It isn't. It's a fine, big usable all-rounder with a wide spread of power; bargain-basement priced at a little over £7,000.

The fact that it is almost cured of all Seventies vices means the ZRX has almost inevitably been sanitised. The Japanese can build a bike for every niche now just by redialling their computers, so the mildly tuned motor may be aimed at born-again bikers who want rugged old looks with Nineties sophistication.

A splash of aggression at the upper limits would better recapture the Z1 spirit, though. Maybe some aftermarket parts could be the answer... plus ça change.

IT'S SHOWTIME

THE INTERNATIONAL Motorcycle Show, which opens next Saturday, sees the stakes raised in the superbike power battle.

Honda's British launch of the revamped Fireblade sees the current streetfighting king lighter and more powerful. But Yamaha's all-new 1,000cc YZF-R1, is the size of a 600cc bike and produces a massive 150bhp—as much as a sports car. The show features a free competition to win one.

At the other end of the spectrum is a flurry of new scooters from Suzuki, Gilera and Peugeot.

● 1997 International Motorcycle Show runs from November 8-10. Ticket prices: £12 adults and £5 children

Politics, not sense, is behind plans to make drivers earn their licences every ten years

Sorry Mr Eurocrat, but you have failed the test

You will have heard of the European Parliament, a club for superannuated politicians seeking a second lease of political life where the salaries are even higher and the expense allowances even more generous.

Some of us have been complaining for years that if we must have this ridiculous talking-shop, then it ought to be given some teeth to go with its tongue.

We were wrong. We blew it. We should have kept our mouths firmly shut.

We should have smiled nicely and said nothing when all those self-important Euro MPs popped up on the telly to explain the latest Strasbourg initiative. We should have humoured them. We should have kept our counsel.

We should not have given them any legislative teeth.

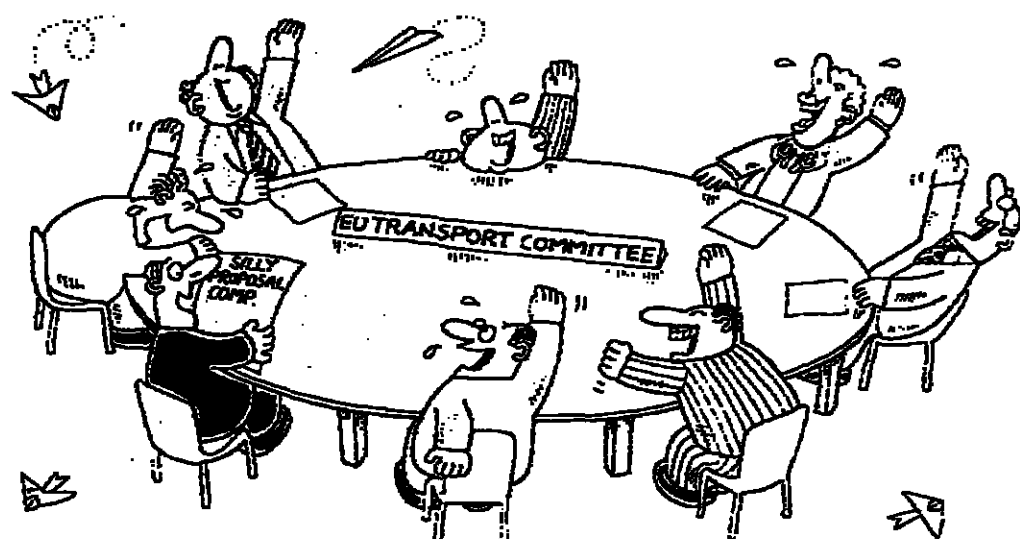
We should have known that they would use them, or try to. What the European Parliament needs, we used to say, is more power to make policy. Now it has more power to make policy.

So what is one of the early moves that it comes up with? A driving test every ten years. Fortunately, it looks as if this proposal, emanating this week from the Parliament's transport committee, may not have the legs to reach the legislative finishing line. Even Neil Kinnock, the EU Transport Commissioner, sounded lukewarm about the idea when it was put to his department.

The trouble is that Euro MPs have become extremely sensitive to the charge that they are politically impotent, so some of the more active ones are looking at every available means of proving otherwise.

Getting themselves plenty of publicity is always a good start, and of course we all either drive or are affected by driving, so what better subject to get their names in the papers?

Mark Watts is a Labour mem-



DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

ber of the transport committee and he had a typically colourful explanation as to why ten-year testing was needed: "It does seem strange that you can be granted a licence of up to 50 years to drive a vehicle that can kill, regardless of your standard of driving," he said. "To save lives we must take tough decisions."

Sorry, Mr Watts, that is wrong. Invoking scenes of mindless idiots in charge of lethal weapons may sound convincing, but it is not in touch with the real problem.

To save lives we must take sensible decisions. To save lives we must make decisions that are based on the facts. Mr Watts may have fun flexing his legislative muscles, and demonstrating how tough he is. But the real test of road safety legislation is whether it actually works.

Where is the evidence that our roads would be safer if we took a driving test more often?

Indeed, if some people are not safe drivers after they have taken the initial driving test, why should they be any safer after they have taken a second one?

Yet it is the case that most accidents, or at least a disproportionate percentage of accidents, are caused by young people: you know, the ones who have just taken a test.

The problem is not that these young people are all reckless, though some are, but that they lack experience.

And, as all of us who have been through a driving test know, a test gives you experience of taking a test, not of driving a car. We may well need a better test, we may well need a test with a motorway

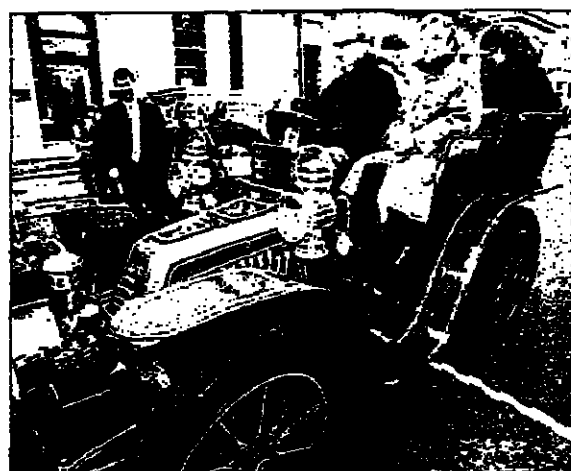
element, for example, but more tests we do not need.

Mr Watts says that under the present system, people can drive for 50 years no matter what their ability, or lack of it. Wrong again. In Britain at least, young drivers who accumulate six penalty points within two years of obtaining a licence must take another test. This is an excellent - and recent - legislative change that ought to concentrate the minds of younger drivers.

Its benefit is not the second test as such, but the fact that the threat of having to take another test encourages drivers to behave themselves on the roads.

Let us leave it at that. Let us not get into what the AA correctly called this week the "bureaucratic nightmare" of ten-year testing, which in this country alone would involve an extra 25 million tests every year.

Great news for manufacturers of L-plates and the printers of licences, but I can visualise civil servants jumping off the roof of the DVLA building if this daft scheme is ever given life.



1901 Mors will represent the RAC on its anniversary

Vets reach 70 on Brighton run

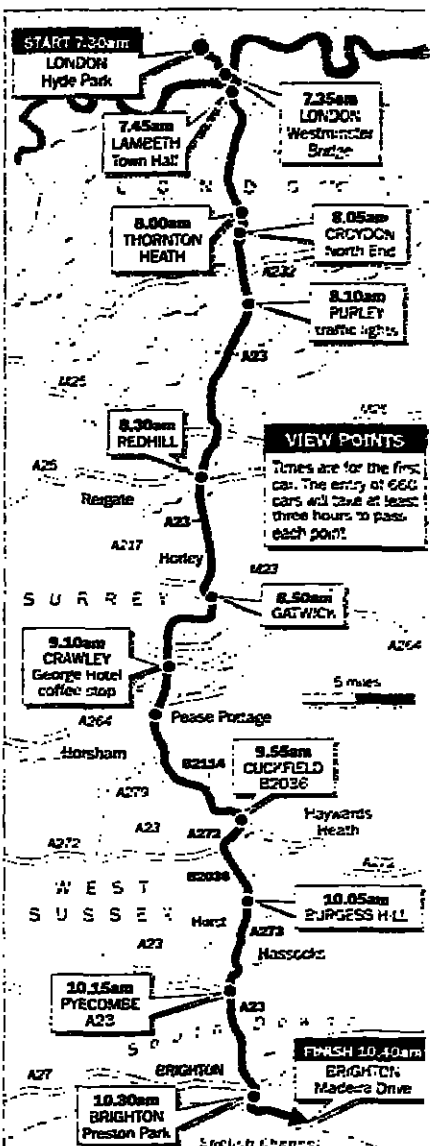
Lord Montagu previews a host of birthdays for the famous drive

The modern London to Brighton veteran runs began exactly 70 years ago, when motorist writer Robert Beare, fascinated by correspondence in the press about how long cars could last, organised a run for cars "not less than 21 years of age" to mark the anniversary of Emancipation Day.

A remarkable 44 cars started, but no one could have foreseen that 70 years later, the run would have become one of the world's greatest spectator events, with an estimated one million spectators expected to watch nearly 450 pre-1905 cars.

More than 60 have come from 15 overseas countries. David Sharpe, who lives in China, has entered a 7mph twin-cylinder 1902 Panhard at Levensay, while one of the oldest participants, the 1896 Peugeot of Tomes Skindinski, is almost certainly the first entry to come from Poland.

Since Oldsmobile, America's longest surviving marque, is celebrating its centenary, it is appropriate that five Curved-Dash Oldsmobiles, America's first



mass-produced car, are taking part.

The 1899 Haynes-Apperson entered by Michel Rothchild is one of the earliest surviving examples of a long-forgotten marque that once claimed to be America's oldest.

Another marque whose centenary is being celebrated this year underlines the fact that America was once the most prolific manufacturer of steam cars. The Stanley Steamer was built by the Stanley twins, who had made their fortune from photographic inventions. There are two Stanleys among nine steam cars from rival makers.

The run's five electric cars include a 1904 Krieger which spent many years on display in the Science Museum and which was brought out of mothballs in the post-war petrol rationing of the mid-1950s.

The RAC, which has organised the run since 1930, celebrates its centenary and is running both its veterans a 1901 Mors driven by Prince Michael of Kent, and chairman Jeffrey Rose, and a 1900 Simms.

(It will be age before for as well a beauty when cars leave Hyde Park London at 7.30am tomorrow for the London Brighton run, the quickest reaching it finishing stop from mid-morning. Eve-Ar Prentice writes. First off will be a 104-year-old Benz entered by Timothy Garrett from Ker the youngest is a 1904 Peerless entered 1 Automobile Deventer in Cambridge.

RAC advice to motorists caught up among the entrants is not to let the brakes too hot because following veterans have primitive brakes to stop contraptions that can weigh to two tons.

The annual run marks Emancipation Day 1896, when the law requiring a man with a flag to precede all motorists was repealed. Has had his hilarious moments though: Richard Shuttleworth's Panhard at Levensay used gallons of water on the 1928 run while h mechanic had to abandon his seat when trousers caught fire. Hopes are high that the run will be a repeat tomorrow.

MERCEDES

2000-2001 1.8 16V, 100,000 miles, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 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Hassle-free home loans a reality for the self-employed

Making a success of your new business will be your number one challenge as a self-employed person, but trying to get a lender to give you a mortgage to buy a house will run it a close second.

The bad news is that if you work for yourself the odds against being granted a mortgage lengthen considerably, particularly if you have been self-employed for only a short time.

The good news, however, is that more and more lenders are realising that with an estimated 3.5 million Britons working for themselves there is a huge mortgage market still waiting to be tapped, and the more innovative among the banks and building societies are trying their best to take the hassle out of home loans for the self-employed.

If you want to borrow less than 75 per cent of the value of a house it is probable you will be classed as a non-status buyer and, because you are putting in a sizeable deposit, your route to a mortgage should be straightforward. However, if you need to borrow more than this, trying to get a mortgage can be a long and frustrating process, especially if you know that you can genuinely afford the monthly repayments.

Traditionally, mortgage lenders demand three years' accounts before they will consider an application from a self-employed person, which leaves anybody with less than 36 months' trading experience technically high and dry. But while these lenders still exist, a growing number are becoming

MORTGAGES

John Givens explains how to keep cautious lenders from rushing for the panic button

ing self-employed friendly and look sympathetically at applications.

The secret is finding a mortgage lender who will make life as easy as possible because starting off with a bank or building society which still adopts draconian policies will cost you valuable time and money, and possibly the home you had set your heart on.

Banks and building societies adopt strict lending rules and want to be sure that borrowers have the ability to repay the loan, with interest. Because the self-employed do not have regular monthly salaries going into their bank account, the lenders get nervous and look very closely at applications from people who work for themselves.

A handful of lenders will be happy to accept two years' accounts as a starting point for a self-employed mortgage application. Among these is the Chelsea Building Society, which tries to adopt a more flexible approach than some of the bigger high street outlets.

David Metcalfe, mortgage processing and telemarketing controller with the Cheltenham-based society, says that everybody is assessed individually.

He said: "We look at each case on its merits but, although we try to be flexible, there are certain things we need to be satisfied of before offering a mortgage."

"Proof of income and stability of profits are important. In some cases, if properly prepared accounts are not available, we will accept verifiable self-assessment forms which the Inland Revenue has indicated it is happy with to give an indication of a self-employed person's income."

However, people going it alone, particularly those new to self-employment, can be their own worst enemy when it comes to applying for a mortgage.

This is because of the myriad of allowances the self-employed can claim against tax, which often result in the end-of-year accounts showing

relatively small profits, which disguise the applicant's true level of annual earnings and leads to the lender rejecting the loan on the grounds of lack of income.

The self-employed might even find getting an offer accepted on a house difficult because many sellers are aware of the problems people who work for themselves can have getting a mortgage.

Howard Davis, Bristol area manager for CJ Hole, an

estate agent based in the South, says vendors are often reluctant to consider their house sold if an offer comes from a self-employed person. He said: "Self-employed people with less than three years' accounts are really up against it."

"About 15 per cent of those buying from our branches work for themselves, and when they make an offer on the property they are immediately referred to our financial services team to see if they meet the criteria for mortgage purposes."

"It is then up to the vendor as to whether we continue to market the property, and I would say that nine times out of ten the seller will ask us to

keep going until it is clear that the buyer has a mortgage in place and can proceed."

Self-employed people who struggle to find a company that will offer them mortgage facilities could turn to one of the growing number of lenders who realise that life doesn't always run in textbook fashion.

Kensington Mortgage Company, of London, has established a reputation since it was founded in October 1995 as a lender who will look at mortgage applications which fall outside of the normal lending criteria of banks and building societies.

Around half of its customers are people who have suffered

financial difficulties in the past but have managed to drag themselves back onto their feet, while a large proportion of the rest are self-employed workers who cannot find a sympathetic ear elsewhere. The company will take applications from self-employed people who have been trading for a minimum of one year and one day and offers loans of up to 90 per cent of the value of a residential property for new purchases and 80 per cent for remortgages, for periods of up to 25 years.

Because it deals with cases where the risk of default is judged to be higher than average, the mortgages charge interest well above the normal standard variable rate, which is currently 8.45 per cent.

Interest is linked to the London Inter Bank Offer Rate (Libor), a variable index currently standing at 7.35 per cent. Depending on Kensington Mortgage Company's assessment of the risk involved, it will offer terms at between 3 per cent and 5 per cent above this rate.

However, on the plus side of the cost equation, the company does not charge a mortgage indemnity guarantee premium, which most lenders levy on funds loaned above 75 per cent of the value of a property

and normally calculated at between 6 per cent and 8 per cent of the amount involved.

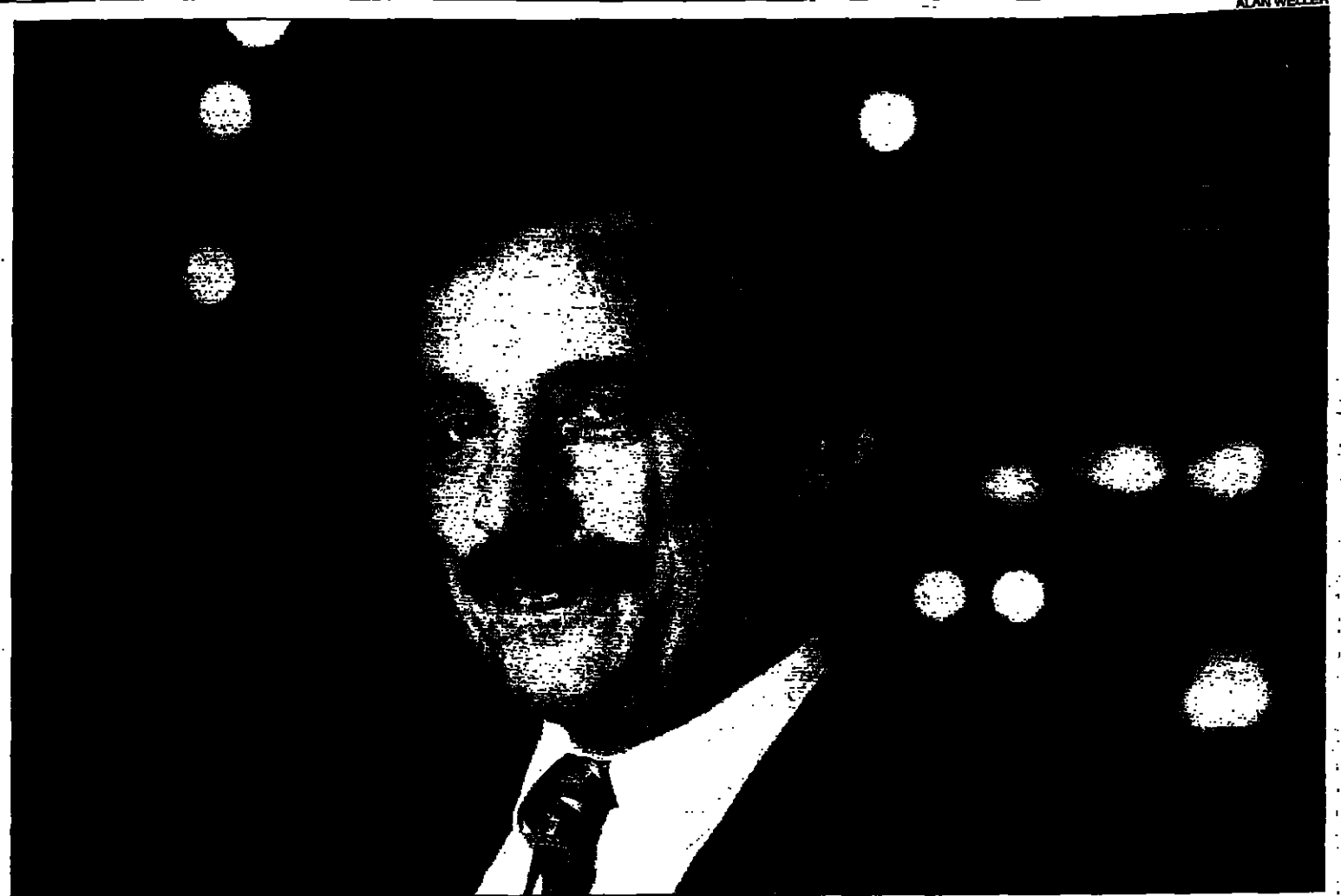
What's more, the redemption penalties are considerably less than at many of the major high street lenders, with a one-off penalty of three months' interest being paid if the mortgage is repaid within three years of it being taken out.

Chris French, chief executive of Kensington Mortgage Company, which has taken on 6,500 mortgages worth more than £350 million in the past two years, says customers appreciate his company's approach to their requirements.

"People like to be treated as individuals, and we try to take a more up-to-date view of what is happening in an individual's life than some of the traditional lenders," he said.

"If we have a self-employed person without accounts, we will ask the applicant's accountant to give a professional view on where income is coming from and look at the overall ability of the person to repay the mortgage."

Although Kensington Mortgage Company's home loan portfolio is only two years old, figures suggest that it has got its risk assessment right, with the number of repossessions still in single figures.



Contractor dispelled fears at interview

Ian Witham, a self-employed computer analyst, found getting a mortgage was easier than he thought, although he has one black spot on his credit record (John Givens writes).

The 43-year-old contractor, currently on assignment with Prudential in London, managed to persuade Bristol & West to give him a £90,000 loan towards a £125,000 five-bedroom

Edwardian terraced house in the Westbury Park district of Bristol in March last year.

Although he was able to produce the mandatory three years' accounts, he also had to explain how he came to have a £3,400 county court judgment registered against him. After Bristol & West was satisfied with his response it offered the father of four

and his 39-year-old wife, Caroline, the mortgage for the home of their dreams.

Ian, who accepted a two-year fixed-rate deal at 4.99 per cent, said: "Although I could show them three years' accounts I felt the interview with Bristol & West was as important to the process as anything else. It gave me the chance to explain

that the CCJ I incurred was because of a dispute with a firm of accountants that I took to court after they made a number of mistakes."

"The whole process took about two months, and because we held savings with Bristol & West it was the only lender we considered going to for a mortgage, and the fixed-rate deal was one of the best on the market."

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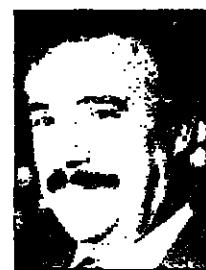
TESSA TROUBLE 62

Saver unhappy
as taxman
takes interest

WEEKEND
MONEY

GO IT ALONE 56

Hassle-free home
loans are possible
for self-employed



A car is the second most expensive purchase you will make. Eve-Ann Prentice shows how not to get caught

Don't buy a banger and crash

Would you buy a second-hand car from this man? The motor he wants to sell has gleaming paintwork and an interior to die for. But it is dangerous and you could pay for it with your life.

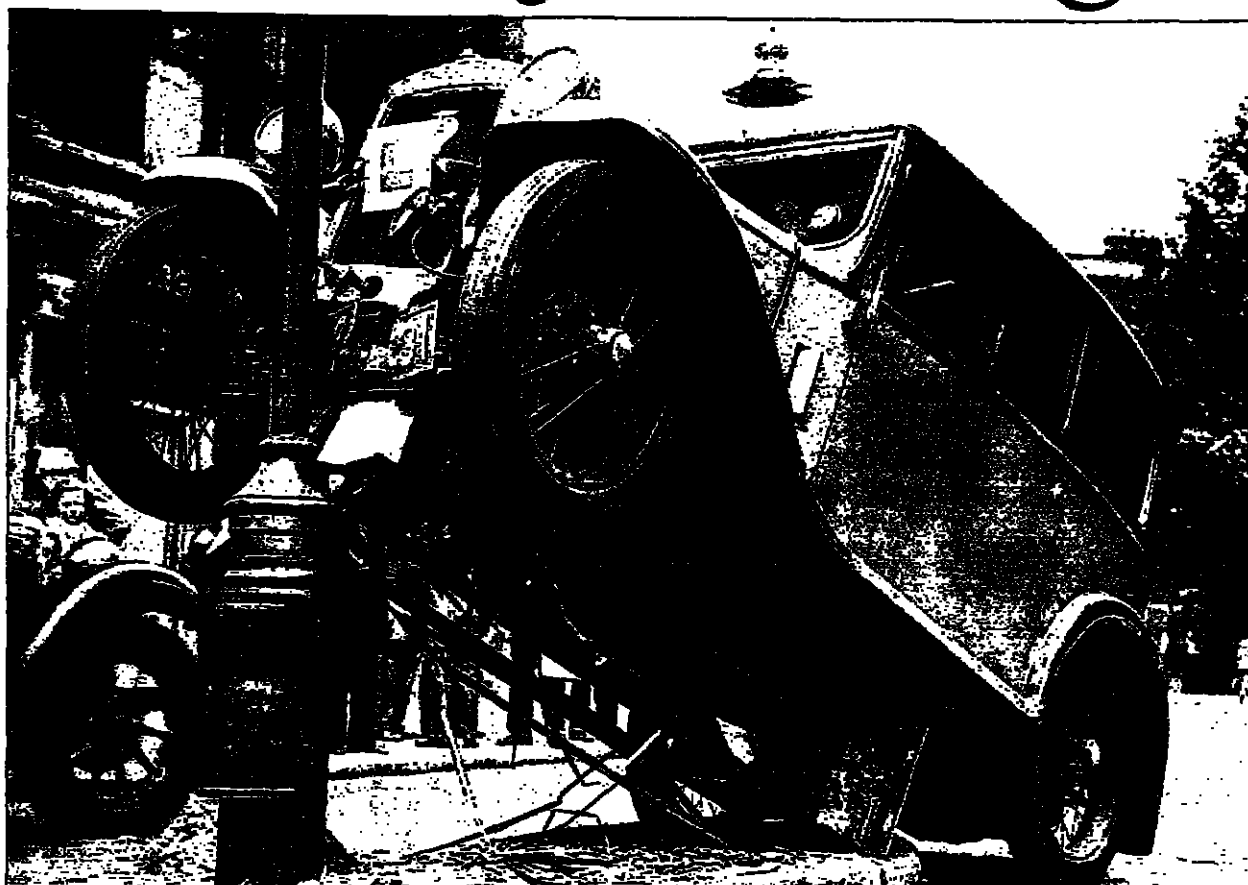
You may think you are immune to the wiles of lane-day Arthur. But you are not. 21,000 cars written off after accidents are believed to go back on the road every year, says the Office of Fair Trading. This endangers not only new owners, but other road-users if the vehicle is in an accident.

About eight million used cars are sold every year and more than a million people — one buyer in six — has a problem within six months, says an OFT report published last week. As well as the obvious perils of resurrected write-offs, used car-buyers are also prey to "clockers" who turn back mileage readings. They also risk buying one of the 300,000 cars stolen each year, while one in seven cars on sale checked by a database company had finance or HP owing.

The scale of the scams is enormous, and in an attempt to make buying a used car less daunting, the OFT has issued a pamphlet, *Buying a Used Car? How to get the Best Deal*. It includes a long checklist for potential buyers.

Before you buy, says the OFT, decide how much you can pay and include insurance, MOT, road tax, fuel and servicing. You can also get an independent inspection (about £100-£300), by a professional engineer or motor organisations such as the AA or Green Flag.

Buying from a dealer is the safest way as you get the maximum protection of the law, says the OFT. "But there are dodgy dealers, so look for an established firm with a good reputation." A trade association sign may mean that the firm follows a code of practice. The Retail Motor Trades Association



Crunch time: 50 years ago small saloon cars were less powerful than today. Now a run-in with a lamppost could easily cost you your life, especially if your car has been "cut and shut" — rebuilt from the undamaged ends of two written-off cars before resale

Motorline (0345 585350) or Scottish Motor Trade Association (0131-225 3643) can tell you local dealers that subscribe to an OFT-supported code of practice.

Buying privately may be cheaper than through a dealer, but is much riskier. The car must be as described, but if a private seller lies about its condition, you can sue for your losses — if you can find him. "Some dealers pretend to be private sellers to avoid legal obligations and to get rid of faulty cars," says the OFT. "They advertise in local newspapers and shop windows." Advertisers with a mobile phone number or which specify

a time to call (it could be a public telephone box) should be treated with care. Alarm bells should also ring if you call about a private car and the seller says "which one?"

Auctions are probably the most risky way to buy a second-hand car, says the OFT, though you can get bargains. Disclaimers, such as "sold as seen", exclude buyers from some or all of their legal rights. Go to see how the auction works: first, then take someone who knows cars when you go to buy. If you buy a stolen car, the

police can take it from you to return to the original owner or the insurance company if a claim has been paid and you will get no compensation, even if the car was bought in good faith. You can sue the seller for losses — if you can find him or her. Even worse, if you bought a stolen car on credit, you may still have to pay off the loan.

If you buy a car with outstanding credit, the lender can usually take it back. Again, you can sue the seller unless he has disappeared. There are some limited exceptions to this, says the OFT, and you may be allowed to keep the car if you

were not aware it was subject to outstanding credit and you bought it in good faith.

Two companies provide information on whether a car belongs to a finance company or is an insurance company write-off: AA Car Data Check on 0800 234999, and HPI Autodata on 01722 422422. The AA also runs a used car buyer helpline on 0800 627726.

Selling Second-Hand Cars and Buying a Used Car? are free from: OFT, PO Box 172, East Molesey, KT8 0XW. An AA guide to buying second-hand cars is free at AA shops.

Door-to-door cash for the bargain buyer in a hurry

You have successfully negotiated the second-hand car market minifield unscathed and found the bargain of the decade. But you need a loan to pay for it and the choice can be as baffling as a bad car salesman's spiel about conroads and big ends (Eve-Ann Prentice writes).

Many people take out hire purchase or a loan from the dealer who has sold them their car, but you should not feel pressured into automatically accepting the dealer's finance package.

With large variations in

interest rates, loan terms and conditions, talk to other sources of finance before making a decision about where you will obtain the finance.

Buying a second-hand car can be almost as stressful as moving home, says the AA, and part of the reason is the large sums involved.

As the table shows, the monthly cost of repaying a typical £5,000 unsecured loan over three years can range from £167.56 to £203.16, depending on the lender, loan terms and if it is insured. As with most unse-

cured loans, generally the smaller the sum that you borrow, the higher will be the interest rate.

Most organisations, such as the AA, charge higher rates to non-members and banks may want you to open an account and make repayments by direct debit.

The AA even helps borrowers to become cash buyers with all the bargaining power it brings. For £30, successful loan applicants can have up to £15,000 delivered to their door by courier.

BEST BUYS IN UNSECURED CAR LOANS

Lender	Advance Min	Max	APR Term	Redemption Min	Max	Penalty	Monthly pymt With ins	No ins	
AA 0800 605030	£1k £3k £10k	£2,999 £9,999 £15k	16.7%T 14.7%T 12.7%T	4yr 1yr 4yr	4yr 1yr 4yr	2 mths int 2 mths int 2 mths int	£196.28	£170.39	M M M
£10 refund on AA inspection. £20 off AA car insurance.									
Alliance & Leic Group 0990 626262	£500 £2.5k £5k £12.5k	£2,499 £4,999 £12,499 £15k	18.5%F 14.8%F 13.3%F 11.5%F	1yr 1yr 1yr 5yr	5yr 1yr 5yr 1yr	2 mths int 2 mths int 2 mths int 2 mths int	£187.73	£167.56	— D D D
1 year's free RAC membership									
First Direct 0800 242424	£500 £2.5k £5k £10k	£2,450 £4,550 £9,550 £15k	14.9%F 13.9%F 11.9%F 11.4%F	1yr 1yr 1yr 7yr	7yr 1yr 7yr 1yr	1 mths int 1 mths int 1 mths int 1 mths int	£186.30	£164.57	D E D E
Halifax via tel brnch	£500	£10k	15.9%F	1yr	5yr	1 mths int	£187.39	£177.32	A.H.L.
1 year's free membership of Green Flag National Breakdown.									
TSB via tel brnch	£500 £3k £5k £7.5k £10k	£2,990 £4,990 £7,490 £9,990 £15k	21.60F 18.90F 16.90F 14.90F 13.80F	1yr 1yr 1yr 1yr 5yr	5yr 1yr 5yr 1yr 5yr	2 mths int 2 mths int 2 mths int 2 mths int 2 mths int	£203.16	£175.10	G G G G G
Up to £50 saving on TSB Motoring Club Breakdown cover available through Green Flag National Breakdown. £10 cash rebate towards TSB motor insurance.									

A=APRs reduced for Lender's existing borrowers and/or salary fed account holders. D=Direct debit only. E=Lender's cheque account required. G=Account required with lender to repay loan. H=Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged. M=Higher rates apply for non-members. AA membership avail. at time of loan. L=Lender's existing customers only. Source: Moneyfacts

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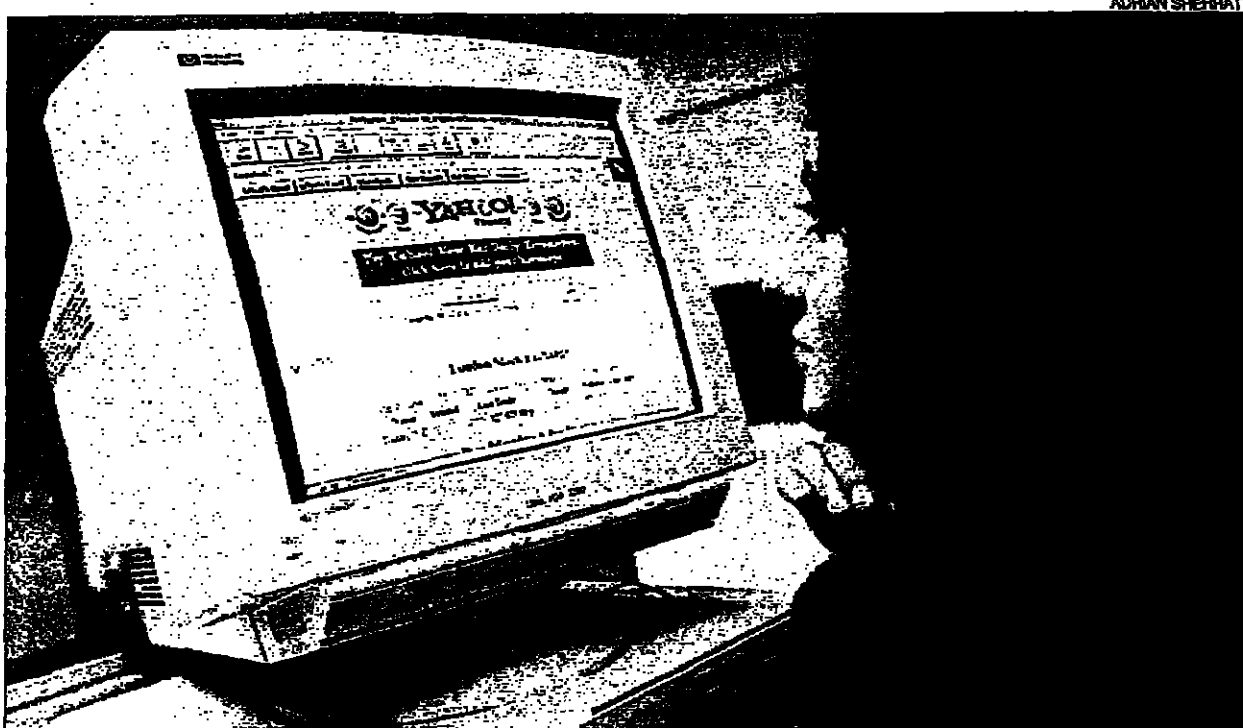
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Susan Emmett on the growing popularity of Internet financial services

Private investors are online and up-to-date



Many people are now turning to the Internet to get hold of up-to-the-minute financial information and services

Not content with waiting for television or the papers to give them the bad news, thousands of private investors went online this week to get the latest on the markets.

From personal equity plans to investment and unit trusts cyberspace has been invading the world of investment as most services are now available online. But it was the sites which showed where the markets were going that attracted most private investors in a week when the FTSE 100 hit a low of 4,382 points.

Since the Stock Exchange relaxed its rules in June and started providing prices for a number of Internet companies, the smaller home player has had access to a cut-down version of the figures available to the big boys in the City.

The Stock Exchange charges for the real-time prices but provides a number of companies with free access to the same information with a 20-minute delay.

The private investment market is growing fast and with growing numbers of sites offering financial information and access to brokers, share dealing is no longer the preserve of City

types. All you need now is a computer with a modem.

During this week's market turbulence, many of Britain's 17 million shareholders took the fast track on the information superhighway.

One of the leading cyber investment companies, ESI (electronic share information), saw trading volumes increase 100 per cent at the beginning of the week and the number of people accessing the site rose to 300,000 a day compared with a normal flow of 200,000. The rate of subscription to the site also rose by 67 per cent.

Julian Costley, chief executive of ESI, said: "In times of crisis people turn to information services. The Internet is already established as a professional source. People now regard it as a viable alternative to the main information services."

For those who register, ESI offers free access to stock prices with a 20-minute delay. Up-to-the-minute market information costs £20 a month. Both services include the overall value of the FTSE 100 and AFX news headlines.

ESI's closest competitor, Infotrade, saw three times more traffic this week. Karen

Nicholls, marketing manager for Infotrade, believes it is the reliability and immediacy of the Internet which has attracted so many private investors to the service. "People just want to do a deal online and not have to wait for the phones to be answered when everybody else is trying to do the same thing," she said. "By using the Internet you know it's going to get done. It's just more convenient, and with the real-time links you can really watch what is going on."

Both these services offer users access to Sharelink, the largest execution-only share dealer in the UK. Online trading on Sharelink increased 20 per cent this week.

Yahoo!, the Internet company, launched a free stock market news and data service on Monday. The timing could not have been better. Iain Osborne, marketing director for Yahoo! Europe, said: "Launching it at that time has created so much interest it has exceeded our expectations. A natural disaster blew some wind into our sails."

The service, providing stock market quotes with a 20-

minute delay and financial news from Reuters and the Press Association, is free and there is no need to register. Other features include exchange rates, precious metal prices, company profiles and share prices from the Paris and Frankfurt markets. There is also a direct link to its service in the US, which combines New York Stock Exchange with a broking service.

There are no links with stockbrokers in this country but Yahoo! is expected to launch an online broking service next year.

For access to other services look up Moneyworld. Information on the London market may run with a 20-minute delay here, but this site includes a directory of links to personal finance websites. The site has its own search engine and allows you to search for unit trusts, investment trusts, pensions, life funds and shares by past performance.

Here are some signposts for the information superhighway:
www.esi.co.uk
www.infotrade.co.uk
www.yahoo.co.uk
www.moneyworld.co.uk

Leave it to the Aunt Agathas

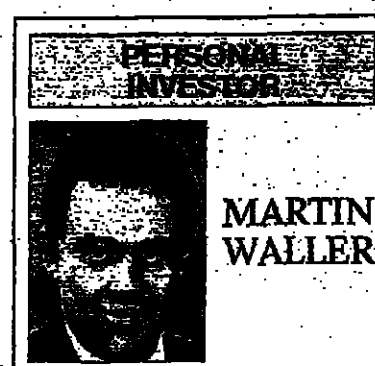
When I started in this business a couple of decades ago, we had a pretty good picture of the private shareholder. A high-net-worth individual, although the term had not yet been invented, and a sophisticated investor with a portfolio of shares that he or she kept a close eye on. Aunt Agathas, we used to call them, and the term stuck.

Privatisation changed all that, introducing millions of less-well-off punters with less awareness of the businesses in which they were tempted to invest by means of built-in discounts. The number of individual shareholders trebled between 1980 and last year, according to the Weinberg report on private share ownership, to 9.5 million — more red-blooded capitalist investors than there were trade unionists.

(Incidentally, one effect of the arrival of millions of people who wanted to know how their investments were doing and, by extension, what else was happening in the City was a transformation of financial journalism. The City pages two decades ago were greyer, drabber affairs, almost entirely factual and assuming a high level of knowledge on the part of their readers.)

The past year has seen an equal sea change. The arrival of millions more investors, many even more unsophisticated than their predecessors — home owners with mortgages, people with a few bob in building society accounts or with insurance policies. They woke up one day and discovered they, too, were red-blooded capitalists.

Then came last week and the Asian flu that came out of Hong Kong and swept world financial markets. It is hard to say how many of those new investors sold in the months before this turmoil — about a third is an educated guess. It is impossible to know, yet, how many more were scared by the headlines since into making a quick exit, even though



MARTIN WALLER

there was a scramble by private investors for the low-cost telephone dealing services at the start of the week.

So there are many millions of passive investors out there with shares they did not ask for that have been rocking up and down with the markets for reasons that, without wishing to sound patronising, I would suggest many of them only dimly understand. It was a criticism of privatisations that, rather than deepening share ownership, it merely widened it, creating millions of small investors with a couple of hundred shares apiece in a handful of companies.

How much truer this is of the wave of demutualisations. Most of these new "investments" — which are, of course, nothing of the kind — have gained in value since they arrived on the stock market. Those earlier gains were not wiped out last week. Put it another way — investors may not have deliberately gone out and bought the shares, but they are still showing a profit on the day they were handed them.

Most commentators are suggesting that these shareholders should stay in. I would take a contrary view. No one can predict stock market conditions going forward, but some months of extreme turbulence are probably the best we can

hope for. It was financial shares, along with the pharmaceuticals, that led the stock market to the heights of euphoria that preceded this week's traumas. If the market is indeed heading for a difficult period, it is hard to see why they, of all sectors, should return to favour.

There is a temptation, entirely human, to look at the peak price your shares reached and to regard any current shortfall to this as a "loss". Had you sold then, you would have got £1,200; your shares are now worth £1,100, so you have lost £100. This is a fallacy. Stock market professionals do not expect to exit investments with the maximum profit possible, but at an acceptable profit. They even have a saying: "Leave something in there for the next man."

I am not suggesting all of those millions of windfall winners should sell on Monday. But I would ask those who saw the value of their only investment ride up and down like a dingle in a storm last week whether they enjoyed the experience. Individual cases differ. Anyone who has credit card or bank debt should use their windfall gains to clear this immediately, as the probable gains on their shares are unlikely to cancel out interest charges. Those who want to continue as investors and maintain some contact with the stock market should consider a nice, safe unit trust.

But others should ask themselves which they would enjoy more — a few more months of uncertainty, such as we all suffered last week, or a new car, or that holiday you have always promised yourself? The shares were a free gift. You are not a willing punter. Should you really be a punter at all?

It might seem strange for a writer in these pages to argue against more widespread share ownership. But you can have too much of a good thing.

National Savings bows to pressure to improve rates

National Savings, which had faced criticism for failing to raise interest rates for savers despite three base rate increases since June, took the decision this week to put up its rates on a range of products.

A spokeswoman said: "We decided to make some products more competitive. We have to balance offering competitive rates with bringing in money cost-effectively for the Government."

There have been three bank base rate changes since June 6 this year, and it is only now that National Savings has responded. The most recent change was on August 8, and in total the rate has increased by 0.5 per cent to 7 per cent.

The average residential mortgage rate is 8.45 per cent, according to the Halifax Building Society.

National Savings is increasing by 0.5 per cent the rate on its popular FIRST Option Bond to 6.75 per cent per annum for sums below

£20,000 and 7 per cent per annum for sums of £20,000. Income Bond rates will increase by 0.25 per cent from December 12. From then amounts under £25,000 will earn 6.75 per cent and amounts over £25,000 will earn 7 per cent.

From November 14, the top three investment tiers for the Investment Account (a one-month notice deposit account) will increase by up to 0.25 per cent. The full range of rates will be 4.75 per cent per annum for amounts between £1 and £499; then 5.25 per cent per annum for £500 to £2,499. After that the rates increase to 5.5 per cent per annum for

balances of £2,500 to £9,999; then 5.75 per cent per annum for £10,000 to £24,999 and finally 6 per cent per annum for £25,000 and above.

For the Treasury's Account (a deposit account for non-profit-making organisations), the rates will increase by 0.25 per cent from November 14, and amounts of £10,000 to £24,999 will earn 5.75 per cent per annum. Balances of £25,000 to £99,999 will earn 6 per cent per annum and £100,000 plus will earn 6.25 per cent per annum.

Peter Bergen, the National Savings chief executive, said: "The increases reflect movements in shorter-term market

rates and will give good returns for customers while still providing cost-effective financing for the Government."

A National Savings spokeswoman added: "The longer-term money market rates are not moving at the moment so we cannot put up the rates on our five-year products."

Interest rates on other National Savings products remain unchanged.

Despite claims by National Savings that it is responding to competition, many building societies, banks and insurance companies have been offering better rates.

For example, Moneyfacts, the money information service, says the best interest rate currently available on an instant access account is 7.09 per cent on balances of £2,500, from Abbey National, and 7.6 per cent on Legal & General's 60-day notice account for balances of £5,000 plus.

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Richard Miles examines the powers of the financial services super-regulator

New watchdog is unleashed

This week saw the unleashing of a new watchdog on the UK's financial services industry, although its first growls went largely unheard amid the turbulence on the world's stock markets.

The Financial Services Authority will bring the supervision of banks, building societies, insurers, unit trust companies and investment advisers under one roof for the first time.

Over the next two years, the super-regulator will absorb no fewer than nine existing watchdogs and put an end to self-regulation in an industry which has been beset by financial scandals and fiascos over recent years.

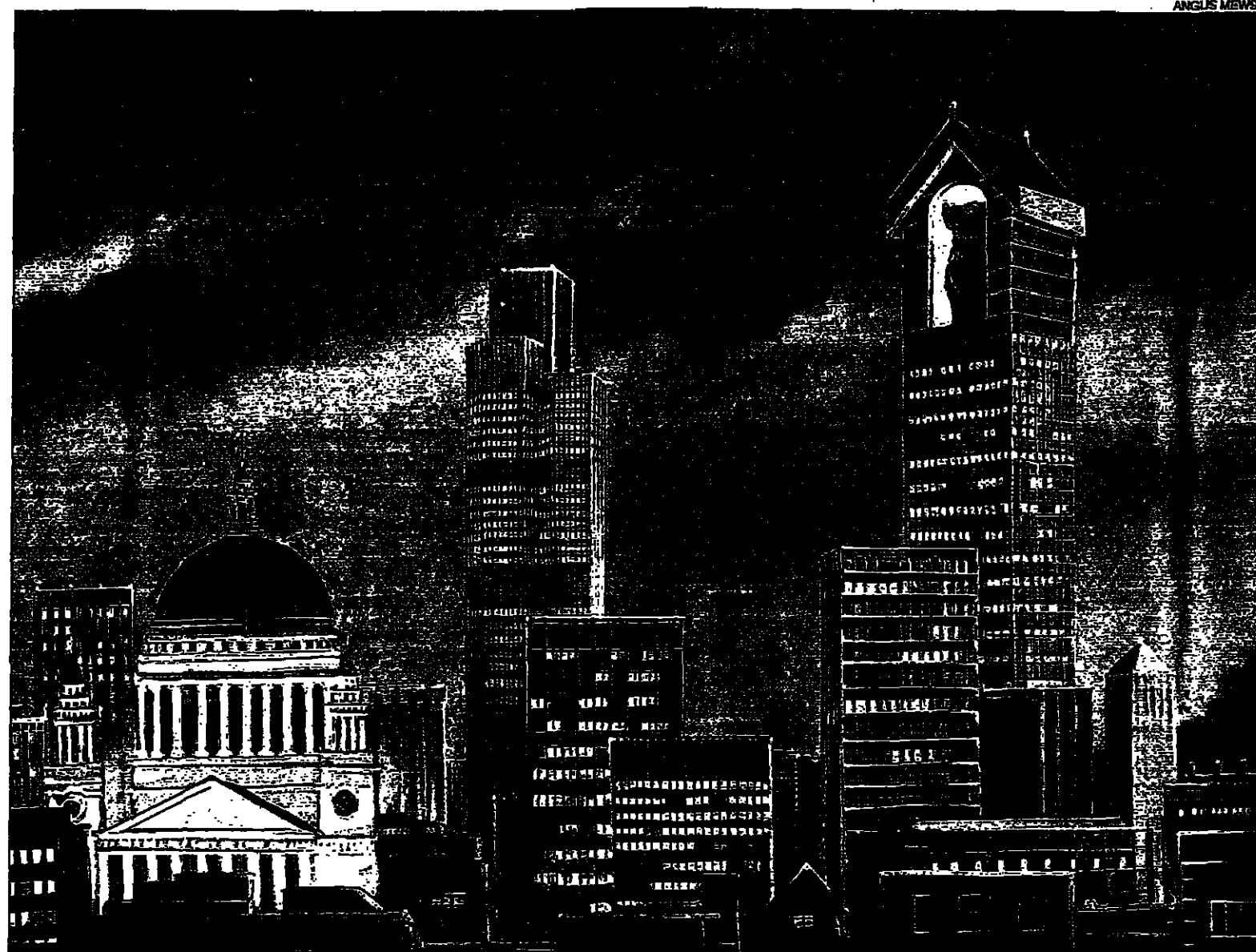
Reporting directly to the Treasury, the FSA will ultimately have the power to fine firms and disqualify individual wrong-doers from the financial services industry. However, the principle of "caveat emptor" will remain in force.

And the FSA will be responsible not only for monitoring the sales and marketing practices of its member firms, but also their financial soundness. If a company finds itself in severe distress, the super-regulator will break a merger or sale to another company so that customers are not left in the lurch.

But there are some glaring omissions from the new policeman's beat. Mortgages, so often the subject of controversy when linked to an endowment, fall outside the FSA's scope, even though Labour, while in Opposition, pledged to regulate the sale of mortgages.

Lloyd's of London, the international insurance market where some private investors have suffered enormous losses because of its arcane rules of unlimited liability, also remains a law unto itself. Long-term care insurance, however, will be subject to FSA monitoring.

At the official launch on Tuesday, the FSA's chair-



man, Howard Davies, formerly deputy governor of the Bank of England, said that the advent of a single super-regulator would help to eliminate much of the confusion suffered by consumers at the moment.

The alphabet soup of regulators—PIA, Imro, SFA, SIB—will disappear and their staff will be merged to form a body with 2,000 employees. Accountants and lawyers who dabble in financial

services will also be subject to the rules of the new watchdog.

Mr Davies is also proposing a single compensation scheme for consumers who fall victim to fraud or negligence. And the plethora of ombudsmen who deal with complaints about maladministration will be whittled down to a handful of arbiters.

Sweeping aside criticism that the FSA could evolve

into a Kafkaesque bureaucracy, where investors are shunted from pillar to post, Mr Davies said the creation of a consumer panel would ensure that the public's view is always taken into account in policy formulation.

He said: "The concept of a single regulator is an idea whose time has come. It will be possible, within such a framework, to achieve significant improvements in operating efficiencies, in

consumer responsiveness, and in sensitivity to the market."

But little of this will happen before the end of the millennium. That is the time needed to pass the enabling legislation, giving the watchdog the teeth it needs to regulate properly. Banks will move over first, followed by insurers in 1999.

Details of the reforms have yet to be worked out, such as whether compensation payments will be subject to the £48,000 limit imposed by the Investors Compensation Scheme, the safety net for customers of independent financial advisers.

Nor has it been decided whether the licensing of

individuals will be extended to all fields. At the moment, life insurance salesmen, fund managers and brokers must register with their relevant regulator.

What is clear is that there will be different standards of protection for consumers and the wholesale markets. For retail investors, the FSA intends to implement highly prescriptive rules because these buyers are most in need of protection from rogue salesmen. By contrast, the professionals in the money markets will be subject to a lighter touch.

In the meantime, consumers are stuck with the existing watchdogs, some of which definitely lack bite. But will the FSA have any stronger teeth?

WEEKEND MONEY

Shop around to find the best term assurance

Most people do not think about buying term assurance until they come to arrange a mortgage, and although it is a simple product rates vary widely. Here Weekend Money looks at how to choose the best policy.

Q What exactly is term assurance?

A It is a form of insurance that pays out a specific sum on the event of your death. Pure term assurance does not involve any element of investment. It simply provides a lump sum to pay off your mortgage and other expenses.

Q Do I need to buy it even if I am single?

A Most mortgage lenders insist on it, even if you are living alone in your own home. It is essential if you do have dependants (including your spouse) because they may be unable to continue with mortgage payments after your death.

Q What is the difference between term assurance and other life policies?

A Insurance companies also sell "whole of life policies" which combine the concept of term assurance with an investment element. A proportion of the monthly premium goes towards the insurance cover and the rest is invested. These are designed to pay a lump sum towards the end of your life. They are more expensive than simple term assurance. Ian Milward, of Chase de Vere, the independent financial adviser, said: "My advice is to keep the two things separate. If you want an investment product buy one, but do not link it to term assurance."

Q How do I work out how much cover I really need?

A Mr Milward suggests a sum equivalent to ten times your annual in-

come. "You do not necessarily have to arrange cover for the full sum if you are in full-time employment," he said. "If you have an occupational pension from your employer you will also receive death-in-service benefits of three or four times your annual salary. If your annual income was £100,000 and the sum you needed to insure was £100,000, then on a basis of receiving £40,000 from your employer on your death, the sum for which you should arrange term assurance would be £60,000, plus the value of your outstanding mortgage debt."

Q Is there an alternative?

A Not really, because it would take a long time to build up an equivalent fund of £100,000 via a savings scheme.

Q How do I buy some term assurance?

A You can shop around yourself or buy through a broker. If you do sort out cover yourself some of the money advice magazines include tables of the cost of cover per £1,000 insured, depending on age, sex and whether or not you smoke. You may have to undergo a medical examination. Independent financial advisers will shop around for the best policy and the companies pay them commission if they recommend the product to you.

Q Are there any penalties if I cancel the policy or swap providers?

A No, according to Tim Cockerill, an independent financial adviser with Whitechurch Securities of Bristol. "However, if you start a ten-year policy and then go to another provider a few years later, you may find it is more expensive because you are a few years older and the premiums have risen."

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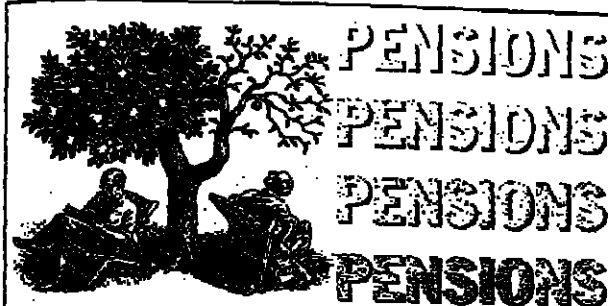
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Helen Pridham explains that widowers may not always have pension rights in the state scheme

Widowers face pensions sex discrimination



A wife's income plays an important part in many household budgets today. In an increasing number of cases, she may become the main or only income earner. So if she dies, any pension she has built up could prove equally vital to her family.

Yet widowers can still find they get little or no benefit from their wives' pension contributions. The state pension scheme is one of the worst offenders in this respect. Although men and women contribute in equal amounts to the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps), a widower will not receive any benefit from his wife's contributions if he is under pension age when she dies.

In contrast, widows below retirement age are often eligible for both a basic widow's pension plus all or part of their husband's Serps pension. They qualify for these benefits if they are aged over 45 or are under 45 with dependent children. The amount they receive will de-

pend when their husband dies. If he dies before 2000, they get his full Serps pension. If he dies later, they receive 50 per cent.

A widower will inherit his wife's Serps pension only if he is over state pension age when she dies. This benefit, which amounts to 50 per cent of her entitlement, was introduced in April 1988, and despite the fact that employees started paying into Serps in 1978 it applies only to contributions since 1988.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is not happy with this situation. An EOC spokesman said: "There are a variety of exemptions and anomalies in the sex discrimination legislation, and the unequal treatment of widowers below pension age is one which we are campaigning to change. Pensions and retirement is an area we are very much concerned with at the moment."

A possible way round the problem in theory is for a woman to join a "contracted out" company pension scheme



or to "opt out" of Serps into a personal pension. Both of these pensions can provide widowers' benefits where Serps cannot. However, there may be other good reasons why a personal pension may not be as beneficial as Serps. For example, if a woman is already in her forties or has a low income. The case of "appropriate" personal pensions funded by

Serps contributions is explained by Lynn Webb of Legal & General. She said: "Where a person is survived by a 'protected' widow or widower a 50 per cent spouse's pension is provided. A 'protected' spouse is someone either over 45 or under 45 with dependent children. Unlike state benefits, no distinction is made on sex grounds."

Where voluntary contributions have been paid into a personal pension, the full value of the pension fund will normally be paid into a person's estate as a lump sum when death occurs before retirement, or it will go directly to the beneficiaries if the policy has been left in trust. When death occurs after retirement, benefits to widows or widowers will depend on the type of annuity purchased.

Peter Quinton of the Annuity Bureau says: "People with personal pensions decide when they buy an annuity what level of benefits are to be paid to their spouse after their death. The pension can continue at 100 per cent or cease altogether. Typically a man will buy an annuity which will provide a pension of 50 per cent for his widow. Where the wife is a

couple of years younger, this will reduce his pension by about 14 per cent because she has a longer life expectancy. A woman in a similar situation who wants to buy the same type of annuity would probably see no reduction as she is more likely to outlive her husband."

Women with company pensions do not have to worry about whether their husbands

will benefit from their contributions should they die before or after retirement. All schemes must give equal widows' and widowers' benefits.

According to the latest National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) survey, most final-salary schemes pay a spouse's pension which is 50 per cent of the member's entitlement. This also includes the part of the pension provided to match the benefits they would have received from Serps.

Money-purchase company schemes work somewhat differently although they do not discriminate between the sexes. On death before retirement, a spouse will often receive a pension based on the value of the member's pension account. After retirement, the member may well be given the same choice of annuities as a personal pension holder. Not all pension schemes have always been so equality minded. The requirement arose after several cases came before the European Court, including the Barber judgment. All pensionable service after May 1980 was affected. This does mean, of course, that where a pension scheme did not provide for widowers prior to that date, the benefits a widower would receive today might be less than those payable to a widow whose husband included service prior to May 1980. If a wife's service ended before that date, her widower may also lose out.

Windfallers warned of a soaking

New investors are targeted by unit trust Peps providers to cut their costs, says Susan Emmett

Only a month after the last building society was floated, investors who transferred their windfalls into personal equity plans are being encouraged to sell their shares and place their money in unit trusts.

Fidelity, one of the main investment fund management groups, is warning investors of the dangers of holding individual shares and is spreading the message that it is wise to diversify.

However, Peps providers do have their own agenda: it is expensive and an extra administrative burden for them to hold small blocks of shares and collect dividends for investors. They would much prefer investors to buy units in their managed trusts.

Fidelity's advice is coupled with a nationwide initiative aimed at educating first-time equity investors after the fund manager's own research re-



Many investors who pepped shares for protection are being encouraged to move to unit trusts

vealed that many are financially unsophisticated. Findings show that 40 per cent of investors who pepped their shares with the company are unlikely to have any previous experience of Peps and may have misconceptions of the

nature of their windfall Peps. About 15 million people received windfall shares. For many of these former building society account holders, this will be their first step into equity investment.

Richard Wastcoat, director of retail marketing at Fidelity Investments said: "Our research shows that there is a worrying lack of understanding of the nature of shares. Many believe, for example, that windfall shares and the performance of these shares are 'managed' because they are held in a Pep."

A total of 15 per cent of Fidelity's windfall Pep investors have already made an additional investment on top of their windfall shares or switched to a managed fund. Only 2 per cent sold their shares for cash.

Mark Bolland, technical director for financial advisers Chamberlain de Broe believes many windfall share holders may not fully understand the nature of their investment.

"Peps are not suitable for everyone and the management costs often outweigh the benefits of receiving dividends tax-free," he said. "This is particularly true for non-taxpayers."

Keith Cival, managing director of Save & Prosper Direct, another company which attracted windfall shareholders, said investors do understand Peps. "I don't see any evidence that they think this is a magic wand," he said. "I believe Pep investors are more sophisticated than they are given credit for. Most of the material sent out by de-mutualising

organisations was geared to helping people to sell their shares or hold them in services designed by the building society. In order to put their money in Peps they had to do their own research."

As well as Fidelity and Save & Prosper other companies which allowed windfall shares in their general Peps include Henderson Investors, Invesco, John Gove, Johnson Fry, M&G, Mercury, Perpetual and Skandia.

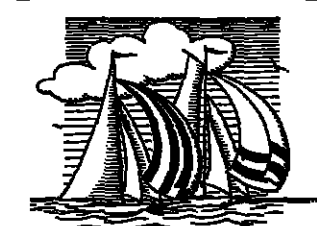
There was no charge for transferring windfall shares to these providers and windfall shares did not count towards the £6,000 a year Pep allowance. With the exception of Fidelity, all these investment companies charge for holding these shares in a Pep. Fidelity is making no charge until April 1999 and will then charge £15 if no further investment has been made.

Other investment companies are also encouraging windfall shareholders to expand and diversify their portfolio. A "significant number" of people who pepped their windfalls with Save & Prosper are now buying the company's unit trusts and Perpetual is advising investors to add to their windfall shares.

Roger Cornick, deputy chairman of Perpetual said: "We are advising investors to balance their portfolio, not by selling their shares but by making maximum use of their Pep entitlement by adding to their shares."

"People find shares in de-mutualised societies attractive because they have seen that in general, the overall trend is upwards. But if investors are looking for steady growth and a more secure home from their money, then diversifying makes sense, the experts claim."

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Hassle-free home loans a reality for the self-employed

Making a success of your new business will be your number one challenge as a self-employed person, but trying to get a lender to give you a mortgage to buy a house will run it a close second.

The bad news is that if you work for yourself the odds against being granted a mortgage lengthen considerably, particularly if you have been self-employed for only a short time.

The good news, however, is that more and more lenders are realising that with an estimated 3.5 million Britons working for themselves there is a huge mortgage market still waiting to be tapped, and the more innovative among the banks and building societies are trying their best to take the hassle out of home loans for the self-employed.

If you want to borrow less than 75 per cent of the value of a house it is probable you will be classed as a non-status buyer and, because you are putting in a sizeable deposit, your route to a mortgage should be straightforward.

However, if you need to borrow more than this, trying to get a mortgage can be a long and frustrating process, especially if you know that you can genuinely afford the monthly repayments.

Traditionally, mortgage lenders demand three years' accounts before they will consider an application from a self-employed person, which leaves anybody with less than 36-months' trading experience technically high and dry. But while these lenders still exist, a growing number are becoming

MORTGAGES

John Givens explains how to keep cautious lenders from rushing for the panic button

ing self-employed friendly and look sympathetically at applications.

The secret is finding a mortgage lender who will make life as easy as possible because starting off with a bank or building society which still adopts draconian policies will cost you valuable time and money, and possibly the home you had set your heart on.

Banks and building societies adopt strict lending rules and want to be sure that borrowers have the ability to repay the loan, with interest. Because the self-employed do not have regular monthly salaries going into their bank account, the lenders get nervous and look very closely at applications from people who work for themselves.

A handful of lenders will be happy to accept two years' accounts as a starting point for a self-employed mortgage application. Among these is the Chelsea Building Society, which tries to adopt a more flexible approach than some of the bigger high street outlets.

David Metcalfe, mortgage processing and telemarketing controller with the Cheltenham-based society, says that everybody is assessed individually.

He said: "We look at each case on its merits but, although we try to be flexible, there are certain things we need to be satisfied of before offering a mortgage."

"Proof of income and stability of profits are important. In some cases, if properly prepared accounts are not available, we will accept verifiable self-assessment forms which the Inland Revenue has indicated it is happy with to give an indication of a self-employed person's income."

However, people going it alone, particularly those new to self-employment, can be their own worst enemy when it comes to applying for a mortgage.

This is because of the myriad of allowances the self-employed can claim against tax, which often result in the end-of-year accounts showing

Contractor dispelled fears at interview

Ian Witham, a self-employed computer analyst, found getting a mortgage was easier than he thought, although he has one black spot on his credit record (John Givens writes).

Edwardian terraced house in the Westbury Park district of Bristol in March last year.

Although he was able to produce the mandatory three years' accounts, he also had to explain how he came to have a £3,400 county court judgment registered against him. After Bristol & West was satisfied with his response it offered the father of four

and his 39-year-old wife, Caroline, the mortgage for the home of their dreams.

Ian, who accepted a two-year fixed-rate deal at 4.99 per cent, said: "Although I could show them three years' accounts I felt the interview Bristol & West gave me was as important to the process as anything else. It gave me the chance to explain

that the CCJ I incurred was because of a dispute with a firm of accountants that I took to court after they made a number of mistakes.

"The whole process took about two months, and because we held savings with Bristol & West it was the only lender we considered going to for a mortgage, and the fixed-rate deal was one of the best on the market."

relatively small profits, which disguise the applicant's true level of annual earnings and leads to the lender rejecting the loan on the grounds of lack of income.

The self-employed might even find getting an offer accepted on a house difficult because many sellers are aware of the problems people who work for themselves can have getting a mortgage.

Howard Davis, Bristol area manager for CJ Hole, an

estate agent based in the South, says vendors are often reluctant to consider their house sold if an offer comes from a self-employed person. He said: "Self-employed people with less than three years' accounts are really up against it."

"About 15 per cent of those buying from our branches work for themselves, and when they make an offer on the property they are immediately referred to our financial services team to see if they meet the criteria for mortgage purposes."

"It is then up to the vendor as to whether we continue to market the property, and I would say that nine times out of ten the seller will ask us to

keep going until it is clear that the buyer has a mortgage in place and can proceed."

Self-employed people who struggle to find a company that will offer them mortgage facilities could turn to one of the growing number of lenders who realise that life doesn't always run in textbook fashion.

Kensington Mortgage Company, of London, has established a reputation since it was founded in October 1995 as a lender who will look at mortgage applications which fall outside of the normal lending criteria of banks and building societies. Around half of its customers are people who have suffered

financial difficulties in the past but have managed to drag themselves back onto their feet, while a large proportion of the rest are self-employed workers who cannot find a sympathetic ear elsewhere.

The company will take applications from self-employed people who have been trading for a minimum of one year and one day and offers loans of up to 90 per cent of the value of a residential property for new purchases and 80 per cent for remortgages, for periods of up to 25 years.

Because it deals with cases where the risk of default is judged to be higher than average, the mortgages charge interest well above the normal standard variable rate, which is currently 8.45 per cent.

Interest is linked to the London Inter Bank Offer Rate (Libor), a variable index currently standing at 7.35 per cent. Depending on Kensington Mortgage Company's assessment of the risk involved, it will offer terms at between 3 per cent and 5 per cent above this rate.

However, on the plus side of the cost equation, the company does not charge a mortgage indemnity guarantee premium, which most lenders levy on funds loaned above 75 per cent of the value of a property

and normally calculated at between 6 per cent and 8 per cent of the amount involved.

What's more, the redemption penalties are considerably less than at many of the major high street lenders, with a one-off penalty of three months' interest being paid if the mortgage is repaid within three years of it being taken out.

Chris French, chief executive of Kensington Mortgage Company, which has taken on 6,500 mortgages worth more than £350 million in the past two years, says customers appreciate his company's approach to their requirements.

"People like to be treated as individuals, and we try to take a more up-to-date view of what is happening in an individual's life than some of the traditional lenders," he said.

"If we have a self-employed person without accounts, we will ask the applicant's accountant to give a professional view on where income is coming from and look at the overall ability of the person to repay the mortgage."

Although Kensington Mortgage Company's home loan portfolio is only two years old, figures suggest that it has got its risk assessment right, with the number of repossessions still in single figures.

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Conal Gregory seeks hidden value in childhood memories

All aboard for Toytown

As an older generation passes on its children's books and toys, many parents and grandparents do not realise that they may be giving away a valuable investment that had been gathering dust in the attic for years.

The most expensive 20th-century author at auction is not James Joyce or Ezra Pound but Beatrix Potter. A first edition, second issue of *Peter Rabbit*, which was privately printed, has jumped in price from £500-£700 ten years ago to £5,000-£6,000, while the first issue can command four times this sum.

Potter's *The Fairy Caravan*, published in 1929, will be offered by Bonhams, the London auctioneer, on December 16 at an estimated £2,750-£3,250. This is the English first edition, although the book was first published in America.

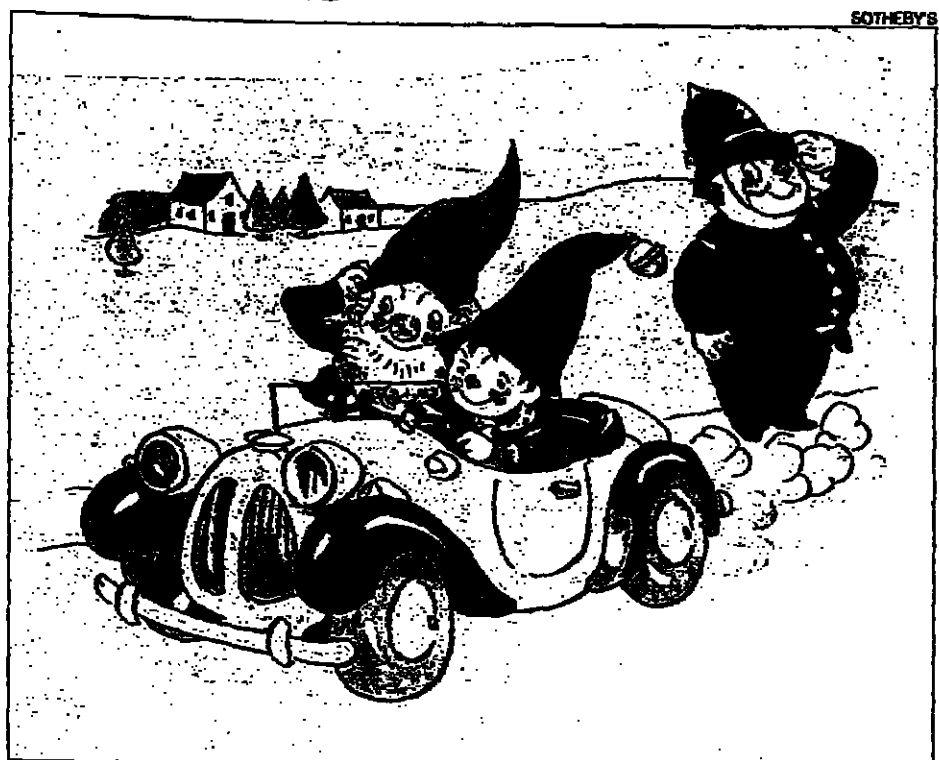
The artwork for Potter's books is much sought-after. An early drawing from around 1893 of a rabbit stepping into snow with an umbrella and basket is expected to make £10,000-£15,000 at the same sale, up from £5,000-£8,000 just five years ago, according to Mike Heseltine, Bonhams' specialist.

Images of a fantasy world have formed a rich thread in British art since the early 19th century — from the visions of William Blake and Fuseli to the vivid, dream-like scenes of the Pre-Raphaelites and Victorian fairy painters. They were followed by the great illustrative watercolourists Rackham and Dulac.

The childhood hero, Noddy, is only now appearing at auction. Created by Enid Blyton, he was brought to life through the illustrations of Harmsen Van Der Beek, a Dutch artist introduced to Blyton in 1949.

On Wednesday a collection of the original artwork was offered by Sotheby's from Trocadero plc, the leisure and entertainment group that now owns The Enid Blyton Company.

The characters from Toytown — ranging from Mr Plod the policeman to Big Ears and Silkie the Pixie — have helped to sell more than 200 million books in more



This Van Der Beek Noddy watercolour fetched £2,300 gross at Sotheby's on Wednesday

than 20 languages. The watercolours greatly exceeded pre-sale estimates with many going for between £950 and £1,700, and more than 95 per cent of the lots were sold.

Yet, while this is Blyton's centenary year, the print run of each edition has been so large that, to date, the individual books have not commanded auction room attention.

The key factors for the appreciating value of a children's book are condition, first edition, together with the dust jacket and, if possible, a dedication from the author.

AA Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, from 1924-28, is a good example of the value in retaining the dustjacket. A first edition set of the four books makes £800-£1,000 but rises to £5,000-£6,000 with jackets, according to Catherine Porter at Sotheby's. This would be where the book has been signed by both the author and the illustrator, E.H. Shepherd.

J.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* from 1937 and *Lord of the Rings* from 1954-55, both make around £500 without their jackets but rise to £1,500-

£2,500 with covers, up by one third in the last eight years. However, Nicholas Worsley at Christie's South Kensington says that there are well-made copies of jackets circulating and therefore specialist dealers and auctioneers need to be consulted.

Arthur Rackham's wonderful illustrations for *Peter Pan* meant a signed limited edition of the book sold for £600 to £800 five years ago but now realises £1,000-£1,500 in its cream vellum binding. Do not confuse this with the coloured cloth-covered trade edition, which is valued at £200 to £300.

Similarly there is good demand for Rackham's illustrated *Fairy Tales* by Hans Christian Andersen where a first edition now makes £600-£800, up from £400-£500 five years ago, but the trade edition is £150-£200. Take care with Rackham's artwork as it is frequently faked.

Original work does pop up in surprising places. Bonhams next month will be selling an

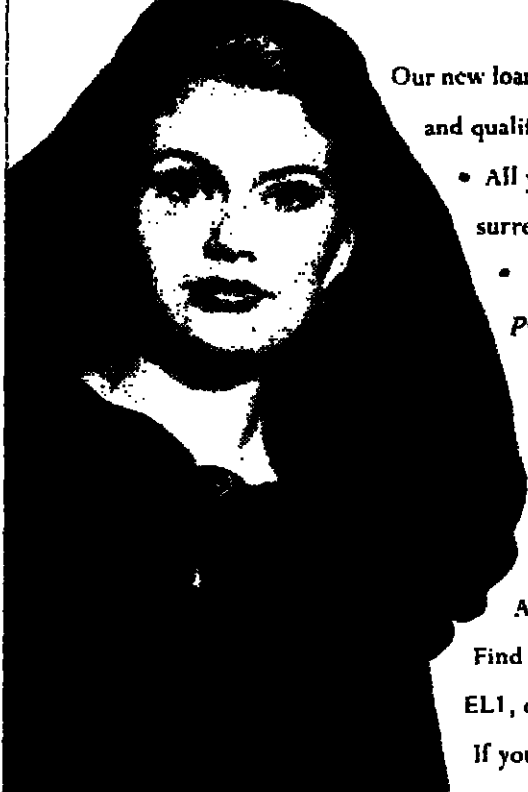
E.H. Shepherd sketch of Eeyore, which was won in a school raffle in the mid-1980s. The character is drawn in three images: approaching his stick home, standing on his head, and looking round at his tail. Five years ago it would have realised £200-£300 but should now make £500-£750.

If Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* appeals, the original drawings by Rex Whistler for a limited edition, published in 1930, considered the artist's finest book work, came under Sotheby's hammer on Thursday. The 26 highly detailed ink drawings and maps were estimated at £50,000-£70,000.

Ida Rentoul Outhwaite is tipped by several dealers. She was an Australian illustrator of fairies. Work that would grace any nursery has risen from £150-£200 five years ago to £250-£350 today.

Kate Greenaway's exquisite watercolours from the Victorian era are also sought-after. An 1876 study of a procession of 16 children carrying flowers was worth £3,000-£4,000 in 1990 and now commands £7,000.

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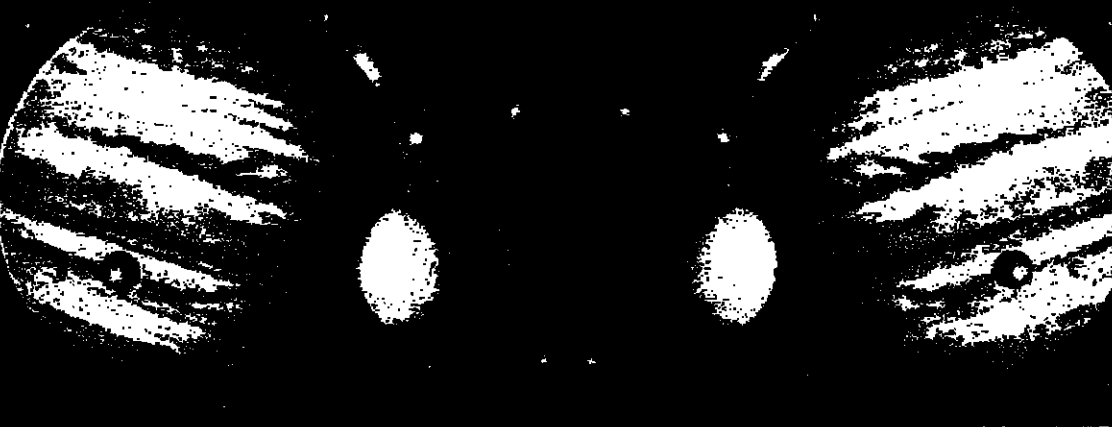
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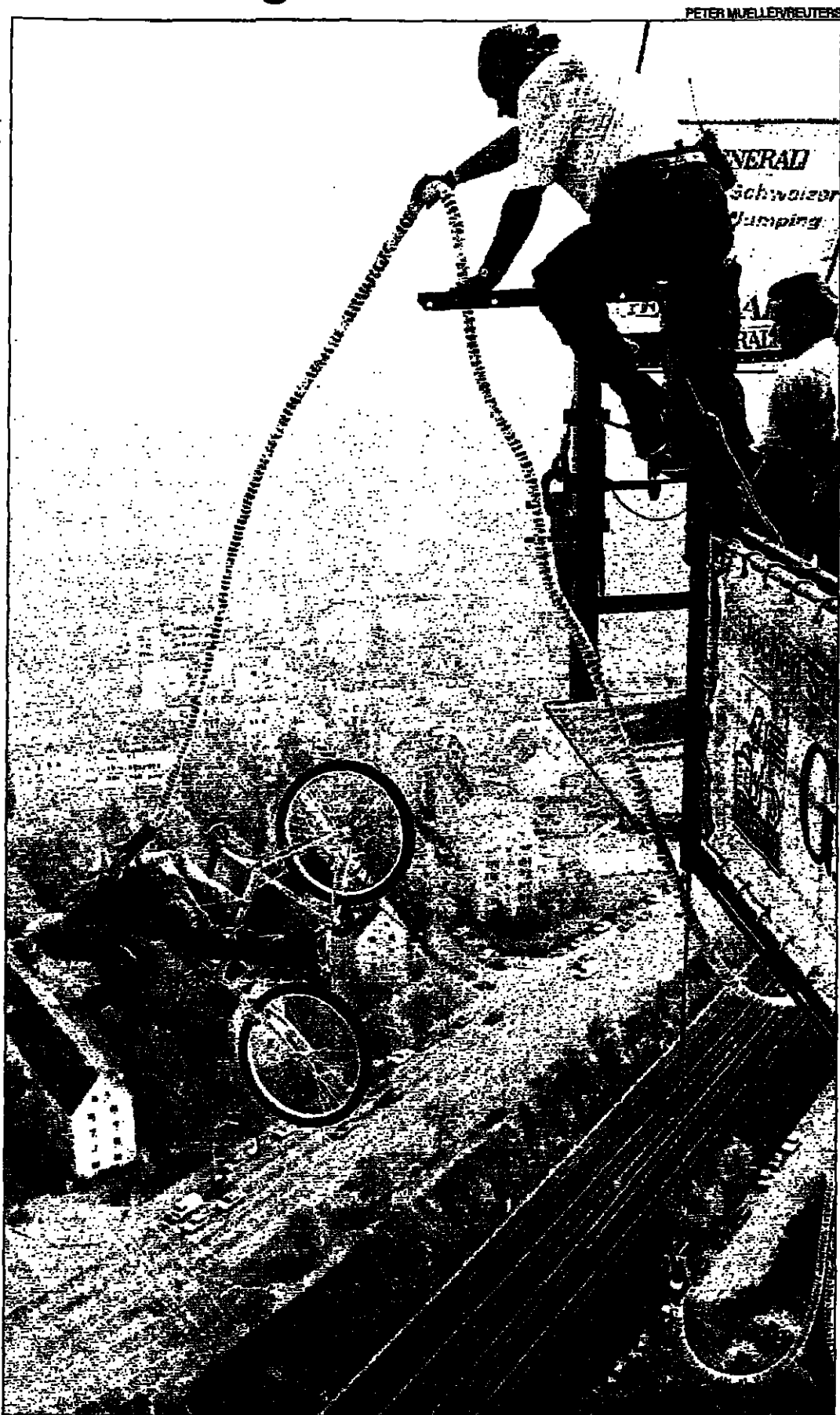
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You need nerves of steel to know when to buy into a falling market. Clare Stewart reports on a turbulent week while

Are you a financial bungee jumper?



Market volatility, global meltdown, dead-cat bounces — we have had the lot this week or at least talk of them. With the focus switching between turmoil in Asian markets to plunges on Wall Street, small investors in the UK can be forgiven for feeling rather confused about what they should be doing.

Should they jump off like a financial bungee jumper and hope the elasticity of the stock market's lower prices will pull them back up or just walk away like those who have no stomach for dangerous sports such as stock market investment? Do the lower share prices mean that it is a good opportunity to jump on board? This week we look at what has been happening and what the market experts are advising the private investor.

Q How serious have the stock market falls been?

A Falls of several hundred points in a day on the FTSE 100, the index of leading companies, not surprisingly rattled investors who until recently were enjoying the fruits of stock market rises. But before any small investors consider bailing out, it is worth putting the recent changes into perspective. In October 1996 the FTSE 100 index of leading shares was just under 4,000. It hit a record high at the start of October, peaking at 5,330, before sliding back to current levels around 4,800.

Q How have smaller investors reacted to current changes?

A Share trading volumes have increased among private investors this week with stockbrokers reporting signs of investor nervous-

ness particularly at the start of the week. Sharelink, the execution-only broker, which is soon to be renamed Charles Schwab Europe, says trading volumes were around double the normal level last Tuesday, though only two clients opted to sell up completely.

Other brokers report a trend back to selling in line with market falls later in the week. "If people have made money, they don't want to see it disappear," said Stephen Landsdown, joint managing director of Hargreaves Landsdown, the broker, in Bristol.

Q What is the advice from brokers and advisers?

A Sit tight and ride through the ups and downs of the stock market. Most investors should look at putting money into equities as a long-term investment for at least five years. Certainly the experience of 1987 lends strength to the sit it out argument. Despite the speed of the share fall in October 1987, the markets recovered relatively quickly and were moving back up, albeit slowly, from late 1987. By mid-1991 prices were ahead of 1987's pre-crash levels.

Q Is 1997 likely to be a re-run of 1987?

A Not necessarily. The current turbulence may seem like unfortunate timing given the ten-year anniversary, but the parallels between the two in terms of causes should not be overdone. Although there are some experts

taking a gloomier view on stock market trends, many economists point to the firm economic fundamentals underpinning both the UK and US, and to the sound growth prospects of leading companies.

While the UK market has enjoyed a strong run, just as it had in 1987, it is not, say analysts, as vulnerable to a correction as the higher flying US market.

Q Have small investors learnt from 1987?

A The calmer reaction of many private investors to recent changes provides an indication of their increased understanding of markets and how they work. "In 1987 people got sucked into poor quality shares and lost money they couldn't afford to lose," says Matthew Orr, of Killick & Co, the private client stockbroker. Today private investors have more broadly based portfolios that will ride out market volatility better.

Q If share prices have fallen is now a good time to buy?

A Another indication of the more sophisticated approach shown by private investors is the number that have moved to take advantage of blue chip stocks available more cheaply. A number of brokers report more buying than selling instructions from clients.

Q What shares are investors buying?

A Think blue chip is the broad advice from brokers to investors. Companies in the FTSE 100, the index of leading companies, have seen the largest falls across the stock market, so provide the

best buying opportunities. Brokers report demand for stocks such as HSBC, Standard Chartered and Cable & Wireless, all of which have seen their prices trimmed because of exposure to the troubled Far Eastern markets.

Other UK banks such as Lloyds TSB, Halifax and the Woolwich are also being snapped up. "The banks have led the market up so they are bound to be affected by the instability," says Mark Bolland of Chambers de Broe. "If they were worth buying before they are still worth buying."

Mr Bolland is also advising clients to look at groups such as Shell, Marks & Spencer, Tesco and United Utilities among the FTSE 100 selection.

Q What other opportunities should investors consider?

A Brokers also advise investors to look at investment trusts, a number of which are now trading at a discount. It is also an opportunity of broadening your portfolio and spreading the risk given a fund's range of investment. Investors buying now say brokers are also taking the opportunity of topping up their Peps.

Q If you have to sell now will you necessarily lose money?

A Not all investors will be left nursing losses if they decide to cash in at current levels. Holders of Railtrack shares may not get the £10.40 that the shares fetched at their peak, but those who bought at around £4.50 will have doubled their money. Similarly Alliance & Leicester shares which floated in April at 542p, peaked at 724p but are still ahead at 680p.

The UK and US stock markets may have bounced back after record drops at the start of this week, but City experts expect further volatility in the coming weeks and months.

Many believe the FTSE is still overvalued and will fall again before it settles. But long-term forecasts remain bullish.

Andy Hartwell, UK equity strategist for Société Générale Strauss Turnbull, forecasts the FTSE 100 will fall below 4,750 points and settle somewhere above 4,400. On Tuesday the index hit a low of 4,382. He said: "The volatility is not over yet. A big rock hit the pool and the ripples are still there. I

think the markets will be tested in the next couple of weeks before they stabilise and start to move gently upwards again."

Richard Kersley, head of European strategy at BZW, said the troubles affecting the markets in South-East Asia and Hong Kong in particular would have a long-term impact on world growth. Such a slowdown will be felt more keenly in the commodities and industrial sectors.

Some believe it could take up to three years for Hong Kong to recover. The fast-growing US economy is

viewed as the other negative in the equation. Many believe that the present 4 per cent growth is unsustainable and could spark a rise in interest rates.

But in broader terms there is a feeling that the markets are moving in the right direction.

Mr Hartwell said: "This has been a correction that I have been waiting for a long time, but it does not change the shape of things. It was an overdue correction that came from an unexpected quarter. The market was overvalued and it took the

situation in the Far East to bring that home to roost."

Bob Semple, UK equity strategist for NatWest Markets, said: "In the long-term the fundamentals are quite good because of low global inflation. We are in a sort of pause for breath in a long bull run."

Mark Bolland, of Chambers de Broe, the financial adviser, said: "We haven't sold anything over the past few days other than South-East Asian funds. This may be a time to buy good-quality stocks. If the quality is good and the investment

decision was right then now is as good a time to buy as any, even if there is a correction."

He added: "Long-term investors should not be worried about what the market is doing in the short term, and there are buying opportunities for the right stocks in the right sectors."

"The danger is to sit on the sidelines and miss it all again. UK equities still represent good value. I think we may look back on this as a healthy blowing off of froth which needed to be done. The market is not for the faint hearted, but it never has been."

SUSAN EMMETT

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Silver lining for bond investors

The downturn in world stock markets could prove a shot in the arm for investors looking to plough their savings into guaranteed equity bonds. There are nine guaranteed equity bonds open for subscription at the moment and, with most of them offering a share in the growth of the FTSE 100 the recent falls, which have seen the index dip below the 5,000 mark, mean the lower than expected start point for the investments should allow for greater growth potential in the future. This is particularly true of the new range of Bristol & West guaranteed bonds which for the first time are being pegged to the performance of three leading stock market indexes — the FTSE, the American S&P 500 index and Japan's Nikkei 300 — all of which have been hit by this week's turbulence in the global equity markets.

According to Simon Pratt, group product manager for investments at Bristol & West, guaranteed investment bonds could see a flood of cash from people wary of keeping their money in the beleaguered equity markets without capital assurances.

He said: "The way things have been going, guaranteed bonds could see an influx of nervous investors' money. Although equities have suffered there is a good chance the markets will bounce back in the next few months and the lower than expected starting point means investors could benefit even more from stock market rises."

All the bonds on offer at the moment are for a five-year term apart from the NatWest Guaranteed Growth Plus Bond and TSB's Guaranteed Stockmarket Bond which run for five-and-a-half years and six years respectively.

The others are available from Abbey National, Birmingham Midshire Building Society, Britannia Building Society and Nationwide Life.

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Patrick Collinson explains why Far East stock markets are important to Britain



Nightmare: two office workers pause to watch prices tumble on a screen at a Hong Kong bank

Why is Hong Kong's market so volatile?

Q Why does a currency battle cause the market to crash?

A The authorities' anti-dote against currency speculation is to put up interest rates. But this is almost as harmful because of the role that property plays in Hong Kong. Four in ten people in Hong Kong work in property or property-related businesses. One third of stock market-quoted companies are property stocks, and another third are strongly property-related. House prices have doubled in the past 18 months. Putting up interest rates threatens to burst the property bubble. So the rise in interest rates to defend the Hong Kong dollar is sending shares crashing.

Q But why is there a currency crisis across Asia?

A For years the economies of South-East Asia have boomed on the back of cheap exports, helped by a weak dollar. But since mid-1995 the dollar has rebounded. The result has been ballooning balance of payments deficits. Speculators looked at the Thai baht and decided it was a one-way bet — the currency had to devalue if the country was to rescue its balance of payments.

Q So is it just about balance of payments problems?

A Not quite. The first victims of the crisis — Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia — all had balance of payments deficits, and a record of overinvestment in unprofitable projects. But Singapore and Taiwan have both devalued even though they are in surplus.

What has emerged is a beggar-thy-neighbour policy of competitive devaluations to keep currencies weak and boost exports. When Taiwan let its currency slide last week, Hong Kong became the next inevitable target.

Q Why doesn't Hong Kong simply drop the dollar peg?

A Politics. Some leading business figures have called for a devaluation, but the Chinese authorities regard the peg as a symbol of the territory's prosperity and its collapse would be a serious loss of face.

George Soros beat the Bank of England. Is the Bank of China going to be any more successful? The Hong Kong

The Hong Kong stock market was at the epicentre of this week's world stock markets falls. The reason is mainly because of a currency contagion jumping from one currency to another across Asia. The virus began in Thailand in early July and has swept through every major currency, hitting the Hong Kong dollar last week.

Yesterday, the Hang Seng index closed up 260.92 points at 10,623.78, a rise of 2.5 per cent. This follows a rollercoaster week in which the index opened on Monday at 11,144.34 and subsequently fell as low as 9,059.89 as panic set in.

Here we explain how the situation has arisen and what investors should do about it.

Monetary Authority is sitting on reserves of US\$88 billion. The Bank of China also has vast reserves which it can throw into a battle against the speculators.

The majority of fund managers believe the peg will last, but the cost — high interest rates for several months — will stifle economic growth and company profits.

Q Why should a crash in Hong Kong affect the City and Wall Street?

A Certain stocks quoted in London or New York, such as HSBC, have a large proportion of their assets in Hong Kong.

Q Why has Japan not featured in the Far East crash?

A The Tokyo stock market has fallen, but not to the same degree as other major markets. This may be because Tokyo never shared in the boom in other stock markets. With its index still at less than half of its 1989 peak, it has less far to fall.

Q I have a South-East Asian unit trust. Should I sell it or buy more?

A Most investment advisers are telling clients to sit tight and not sell. But some forecast more pain in Thailand and Malaysia and are telling clients to steer clear of these countries.

Q I don't have any unit trusts investing in the area. So can it affect me?

A Yes. The £660 billion UK pension fund industry has been a large player in South-East Asian markets. If you have an occupational pension scheme, it is likely that the fall will have reduced the size of your pension pot. However, over the longer term, the damage is likely to be minimal.

Trusts have had to take a heavy hit on Hang Seng

Latest figures from Micropal, the statistics bureau, show the three trusts investing solely in Hong Kong have each plummeted, losing more than 20 per cent in the past week.

With the Hang Seng index falling 18.88 per cent the trusts were bound to follow suit, with Gartmore's Hong Kong fund falling worst by shedding 21.46 per cent. It has been closely followed by HSBC's Hong Kong Growth trust, which lost 21.17 per cent, and Old Mutual's Hong Kong Trust, which slipped 21.02 per cent.

According to Sean Kelly, Asia Pacific fund manager at Gartmore, Hong Kong's problems have been caused by factors other than the

turmoil experienced this week in the world equity markets.

Mr Kelly said: "Everything has fallen in a heap in recent days and it is partly down to the amount of derivatives trading going on and concerns about the viability of the Hong Kong dollar being linked directly to the US dollar as much as it is to do with the falls in global equity markets."

Just about all of the unit trust funds that invest in the Asia Pacific region have suffered falls this week, with the best-performing fund — the Stewart Ivory Asia Pacific — losing nearly 10 per cent.

Peter Warwick, who manages Fleming's Asian Investment Fund, says the outlook

for Hong Kong is at best uncertain, with the property market central to problems. He said: "Recent speculation in the Hong Kong dollar has pushed up short-term interest rates, which has affected Hong Kong's most valuable asset, the property sector."

"Property transactions have ground to a halt with a knock-on effect on equity prices throughout the property stocks and in to utilities which offer a safer earnings profile."

"The short-term outlook is uncertain and it is unclear what will happen to property prices. We expect volatility to remain high in the stock market."

JOHN GIVENS

Her recovery from a heart attack also brought the bailiff round

Lucy

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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

You will multifunction and like it

From Mr Alan M. Pardoe
Sir, Abbey National Bank plc has informed me that when my £100 cheque guarantee card expires, I shall be issued with a "multifunction" card. These functions cover cash withdrawal, previously covered by a separate "Abbeylink" card, £100 cheque guarantee and a Visa debit card.

Neither my wife nor I has credit or debit cards and do not want them. If a "multifunction" card falls into the wrong hands, it would be a simple matter for the user to purchase goods with it and sign the invoice with a copy of the signature that is on the card. I do not wish to be forced to have a card with this questionable facility, yet I can do nothing about it. The staff at my local Abbey National Bank sympathise with me, agreeing that this is a risk and so do the staff at the local Halifax and

Nationwide branches where I made inquiries.
The only option appears to be to revert to a £50 cheque guarantee card with its attendant shortcomings. Are my wife and I alone in not wishing to be forced into taking unnecessary risks with our current accounts?
Yours faithfully,
ALAN PARDOE,
Hebron House,
Blackheath Way,
West Malvern,
Worcestershire.

Interesting

From Mr J. Hall
Sir, I recently transferred the balance from one of my credit cards to the other with a "balance transfer cheque". Thousands of people probably do this every day but I found something out that may raise a few eyebrows.

When I inquired as to the balance of the account to which the amount had been transferred, the operator confirmed that the cheque had been cashed and I was now accruing interest. To my amazement, when I called my other credit card, the balance was still there, untransferred, also accruing interest!
When I asked for an explanation, I was told that the funds would take four working days to reach my account. In the meantime I'm paying interest to two credit companies on the same money. No wonder they are all so successful.

This sort of thing is certainly unfair but can anyone advise as to the legality of such practices?
Yours faithfully,
JUSTIN HALL,
98 Broad Inge Crescent,
Chapelton, Sheffield.

Will Nationwide directors forgo any future windfalls?

From Mr K. Chambers
Sir, I understand that the Nationwide Building Society is to require new members to sign away in advance any possible windfall as a donation to charity in the event of a future flotation — an interesting variation on the theme of mutualism, telling members what to do with their own money.

May we existing members likewise insist that the directors — obviously not the same

ones who earlier made overtures to the National Provincial — underline their own avowed commitment to mutualism by promising to forgo any windfalls to which they might be entitled should they at some future stage recommend flotation.
Yours faithfully,
KEITH CHAMBERS,
19 Hill Road,
Oakley,
Basingstoke,
Hampshire.

Some highly improbable bad luck

From Mr J. Bullman
Sir, Mr Ingram's letter (where he is the monthly prizes from my 20,000 Premium Bonds, September 13) complaining that a 20,000 block of bonds does not win a prize every month will, I am sure, get a reply including the phrase "in the long run".

I have had a varying number of bonds since they started, and have had about 150,000 monthly "chances", so I might have expected eight or nine "hits" of some value or other. Since I have had none I amuse myself by working out the extreme improbability of my misfortune. There is a statistical tool

which measures the extent to which observed values depart from the expected. By this test, the probability of a sample producing a result so different from the expected is 1:10,000 — a probability of 0.1 per cent. It is tempting to conclude that there is a probability of 99.9 per cent that some factor, other than the laws of chance, is operating. I am afraid the truth is more simple: like Mr Ingram, I am just very unlucky.
Yours faithfully,
JOHN BULLMAN,
Graham House,
Boxford, Sudbury, Suffolk.

Home-income plan problems

From Mr A.B. Craven
Sir, The article on home income plans by Gavin Lumsden (Home-income plans are given a new lease of life, Weekend Money, October 11) gave warning on what happened to the elderly in the late 1980s.

However, it failed to state that the problems remain for an estimated 10,000 victims who have ever-increasing mortgage debts with the lenders, primarily building societies. The stress caused is unimaginable and cases of suicide are known.

Apart from the Cheltenham & Gloucester, all other lenders

have distanced themselves from the plans, stating that they merely lent the money. Future litigation may prove otherwise.

The advice to use your own solicitor and not one recommended by the plan provider is excellent.

The solicitors in the late 1980s let down the elderly with cheap conveyancing and lack of advice.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY CRAVEN,
White Cottage,
Elsternwick,
Burton Pidsa,
Hull,
Humberside.

Rambling around with £8,700

From Mr T. Radice
Sir, With virtually every salesperson or accounts clerk now termed a "consultant" it was perhaps only to be expected that the "customer care" industry should start to look for new euphemisms and pretentious staff titles.

This morning I received a duplicated letter from the "Director of Customer Satisfaction" (signature undecipherable) of a US-owned financial institution, through whom I hold a Ramblers' Association Visa card, headed "Good news! Your new credit limit is £8,700", and beginning "we are delighted to announce that you have been given an increase to your credit limit" (already unnecessarily high).

After pointing out the exciting opportunities I now have for buying a new car, going on holiday, or simply shifting debt from one account to another, the writer tells me that if I do not want to take advantage of the new limit, I should simply telephone a freephone number "and one of our Customer Satisfaction Representatives will be happy to return your credit limit to its

Take me to your
Director of Customer
Satisfaction



original level".
Yours faithfully,
THOMAS RADICE,
10 Middleton Road,
Golders Green,
NW11.

Annuity reform would be a popular government move

From Mr Douglas Grubb
Sir, Your item on compulsory purchase pension annuities (Rumours over EMU hit pensions, Business News, October 1) indicates that the sum on offer for a 60-year-old man is now not greatly in excess of that to be achieved gross with a good building society account or indeed a personal investment in gilts.

Under the present system any remaining capital is scooped by the pension provider on the death of the annuitant (or, surprisingly, spouse, for a joint-life annuity). This arrangement was greatly criticised by correspondents to *The Times* at the

end of last year and John Major missed a golden political opportunity in not proposing reform before the election.

That is all now history, but it is to be hoped that the new Government will consider as part of its pensions review the whole question of compulsory purchase annuities. A change in the rules at least to allow the option for independent investment and retention of remaining capital within the estate would, I am sure, be most welcome to a majority of pensioners.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS GRUBB,
52 Hulam Grange Crescent,
Sheffield.

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THE WEEK IN MONEY

FIGURES published on Monday by the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (AUIF) revealed sales of unit trusts and personal equity plans to private investors in September were £418 million, almost twice the total seen in the same month of 1996 and up 20 per cent on August. About £65 million of the £418 million invested by individuals went into index-tracker funds and £129 million into UK trusts.

Four operators will be ordered to change the way they sell package holidays when the Monopolies and Mergers Commission publishes its report into anti-competitive behaviour by travel companies.

The MMC report, which will be passed to Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, on November 7, will recommend that travel companies make clear the connections between their integrated airlines, high street shops and tour operating arms. The investigation was prompted by complaints from small independent travel companies that the might of Thomson and its rival, Airtours, was squeezing them out of the market.

On Tuesday, Gordon Brown unleashed on the City a new super-watchdog — the Financial Services Authority. The FSA replaces the Securities and Investments Board, the chief regulator, and over the next two years will absorb nine frontline watchdogs. Its brief is to boost consumer protection after a series of City scandals.

Many low-cost telephone sharedealers saw sell orders pour to three times normal levels on Tuesday. Panic selling by small investors began as the market opened with a 450-point collapse. Immediately after the 9.30am and 11.00am BBC Television updates of share prices on Ceefax, the telephone lines at low-cost telephone sharedealers were jammed by small investors wanting to sell. Stockbrokers are calling it the "Ceefax" effect.

Radical reform of retirement provision has been called for by insurance groups in submissions to the Government pensions review. Their controversial proposals include a better deal for women pensioners, and changes in tax relief rates.

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If the new Isa is to attract a big following it must not suffer the fate of Tessa, says Helen Pridham

Taxman spoils Tessa cash access



Jennifer Thornton, 62, from Cambridge has been disappointed by the limited access she has to the interest on her Tessa which she started with the Alliance & Leicester in April 1993.

"I thought that as long as I left the capital untouched for the full five-year term, I could withdraw all the interest from my account without affecting its tax-free status," said Ms Thornton. She started to dip into the interest when she retired from her job as an administrator at

Cambridge University in January. But now she has been told that she can only have another £50 or she will have to pay tax on all the interest.

"I had expected to be able to withdraw another £300 or so. This would still have left £9,000 (the maximum that can be invested in a Tessa) in the account," she pointed out.

In fact, it is not only the capital that has to remain invested in the Tessa for the full term in order to retain the tax advantages. An amount equivalent to

the tax on the interest must be left there also. Geoff Seymour of the Alliance & Leicester says this point is explained in the literature.

But the relevant section entitled "Access to your money" starts rather misleadingly: "You can withdraw the full amount of interest that's already been credited to your account at any time," it says, before adding "less a sum equal to the amount of income tax".

Simplicity is the key to promote thrift

Early indications are that the new individual savings account (Isa), which the Government is planning to introduce in April 1999, may not only provide less tax relief than personal equity plans (Peps) and tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) but could end up a considerably more complex product. Yet experience shows simplicity is vital if people are to be encouraged to save and not feel cheated by small print.

Even Tessas — which were meant to be straightforward savings products — have managed to confuse people and left some feeling dissatisfied, as reader Jennifer Thornton's experience indicates. What's more, Tessa providers themselves have succeeded in making their products increasingly complex and less portable as time has gone on.

Another shock can await investors who wish to transfer their Tessa from one provider to another. The accounts were intended to be portable. Giving savers the freedom to move is important because it enables them to get the best returns on their money. However, some providers impose such hefty penalties that savers are effectively trapped.

One of the worst offenders is the Birmingham Midshires, now the UK's fourth largest building society, which not only offers seven different types of Tessa but deducts an excessive 180 days' interest if savers transfer to another provider. At current rates, some with £3,000 in the

society's variable-rate Tessa would have to forfeit £107 in interest in order to move. With £5,000 invested, the penalty would be more than £200.

Birmingham Midshires said: "The reason for this penalty is that we want to be sure we attract only serious investors." But most serious investors may prefer to have the option to shop around, especially with Isas on the horizon.

The value of portability is well illustrated by the current differences in the rates, at present being paid on both first and follow-on Tessas. For investors with less than £2,000 in their account, for example, returns range from 6 per cent at the Yorkshire Bank to 7.6 per cent at the Hanley Economic Building Society. Even investors with the maximum of £9,000 invested in a follow-up Tessa are getting less than 7 per cent from some providers such as at the Manchester Building Society and the Co-operative Bank.

Graham Hooper, of Chase de Vere, the financial adviser, urges investors who are getting an inferior rate to consider a switch. "Naturally it is important to take into account any transfer penalties but the extra gains from a competitive Tessa could more than make up for the cost," he said.

Penalties vary enormously. There are still some providers such as the TSB which make no charge at all for transfers, though since the TSB is currently paying a competitive rate of 7.2 per cent on its Tessa

it is unlikely that many people would want to move. Other providers make no charge if the investors give a certain period of notice, ranging from seven days to 90 days, while some levy a flat fee of between £10 and £50 to cover the administration costs.

One source of transfer business in recent months has been investors switching from the new banks to the mutuals. Some mutuals have stopped taking transfers as a result. Not so the Bradford & Bingley, where Matthew Jackson says that the number of Tessa transfers has risen from a total of 108 in 1996 to an average of 50 a day this year.

Mr Jackson said: "Most of the transfers this year took place after we introduced our members' benefit package in March which led to more competitive rates on all our accounts." Bradford & Bingley currently pays 7.4 per cent on its Tessa which requires a £1,000 minimum investment.

The mechanics of making a transfer are relatively straightforward. Investors must inform their existing provider they want to switch and then open the new account. The money itself will be transferred directly from the old to the new Tessa provider. Mr Jackson said this procedure usually takes about six weeks from start to finish. The investment continues to earn interest throughout except for the few days when the cheque is in the post.

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Isa begins to take shape

The Government proposes to improve our lamentably low level of savings for rainy days and retirement through individual savings accounts (Isas) and stakeholder pensions. Although details of the structure of the Isa have begun to emerge, the stakeholder pension remains a nebulous concept.

This week a number of life insurance companies put forward radical proposals to flesh out its bones. Legal & General, NatWest Life and Norwich Union also all recommend thoroughgoing reform of the current pension system, including the state schemes. They put forward proposals that would mean increases in the basic state pension, but without further adding to the burden on

future taxpayers. Norwich Union recommends that we should be required to pay into pensions, a controversial view, as compulsory pension contributions are seen as a hidden tax. NatWest Life suggests the establishment of a best buy "Kitemarked" list of pensions that meet certain quality, service and other criteria.

Legal & General proposes that stakeholder pensions will have low charges that do not take a large bite from small contributions. Like Norwich Union, it believes that there should be no penalties imposed on those who cannot make regular contributions, or who have periods out of work.

People would be able to choose to receive their basic state pension through their stakeholder pension, an arrangement that Legal & General believes would allow the link with earnings to be re-established. At present, the basic state pension rises in line with prices, and this has led to a reduction in its value. The Government would divert a portion of an individual's earnings to the stakeholder pension. Here, in theory at least, it would grow in line with rises in earnings.

Under L&G's plans, the individual could at retirement transfer a portion of the fund tax-free into a long-term care savings plan. Anyone contributing to any type of pension would receive tax relief at the rate of 33% per cent. At present, relief is given at the 23 per cent basic rate of tax and at the 40 per cent higher rate.

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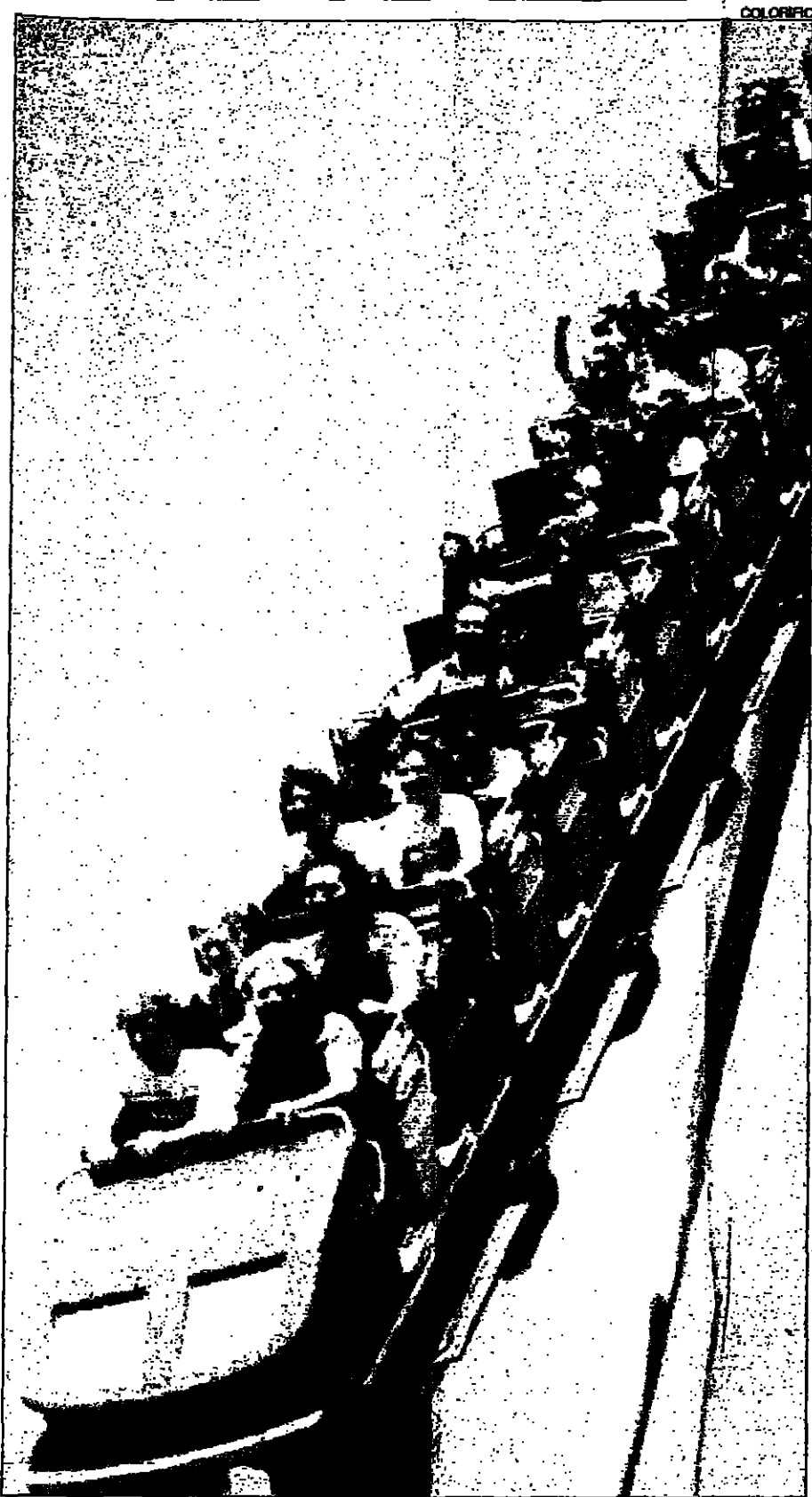
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Don't you wish now you had blown your windfall?

WEEKEND MONEY

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The income bond that did not have happy returns



Rollercoaster ride goes on

The stock market has taken investors on a rollercoaster ride, with more white knuckle moments in one day than most theme parks can produce in a year. But, although some individuals took fright, most investors were icy calm, taking a long term view and viewing the downturn as a buying opportunity. We assess the implications of the events of October 1997 on your personal finances.

UNIT TRUSTS: investors took a phlegmatic approach to this week's market gyrations. Virgin Direct, which sells Britain's most popular Pep based on an index-tracker unit trust has seen customers clamouring to invest, rather than cash in their holdings.

Tony Woods, of Virgin Direct, said: "We have been extremely busy. On an average day, we take £1 million, but on Thursday we took £1.5 million. Even on the bleakest days, there were only a few customers asking for withdrawal forms. People are seeing this as an opportunity to get into the markets. We have written to customers stressing that time, not timing, is the key to successful stock market investment. The only investors who make a loss in a serious stock market fall are those who cash in their investment and realise their losses."

The sangfroid of clients surprised many in the industry, who feared the market drop on Monday night would lead to a flood of panic calls. Ruth Clarke, development director at Commercial Union Trust Managers said: "Investors had been conditioned to expect a correction. Now that it has happened there is a sense this may be an opportunity to move back in."

INVESTMENT TRUSTS: investors here were also largely unruffled. Fleming Investment Trust Management, with £4.7 billion under management in its 19 trusts, said reaction from investors had been calm, though its most popular trust fell by 33p on Tuesday but only 12p over the week. Fleming said: "We have not been deluged with calls but those who did ring have been fairly calm and many had been expecting a market correction."

However, the downturn has widened the discounts that plague the industry. In some cases they may be up to 20 per cent. Previously the average was 12 per cent. A trust is trading at a discount when the share price is less than the net asset value—the index which shows the value of the assets in the fund divided by the number of shares in issue.

Those holding lump sums in trusts are looking at losses. But those who make monthly contributions to trust savings schemes stand to benefit. They will be able to buy more units with their monthly premium because of the price falls.

MORTGAGES: the nose-dive in shares could bring good news for homeowners with the expected November rise in mortgage rates now likely to be avoided.

Experts had forecast another quarter per cent rise in the standard variable rate as the Bank of England tries to suppress an overheating economy, but the market fall means it is likely to be put on hold.

John Killens, of Bristol & West, the former building society, now part of Bank of Ireland since August, said lower share prices could set the trend for lower fixed-rate mortgages in the next three to five years. He said: "The combination of falling equity markets and Gordon Brown's announcement that Britain will keep out of a single European currency for at least the next five years is good news for borrowers."

"It means lenders will be able to buy medium-term money more cheaply which means a four or five-year fixed-rate mortgage will offer good value to homeowners."

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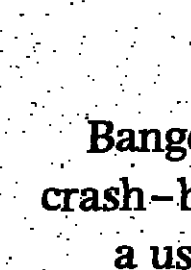
"It means lenders will be able to buy medium-term money more cheaply which means a four or five-year fixed-rate mortgage will offer good value to homeowners."

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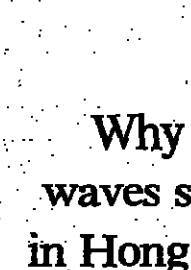
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WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

You cannot time the stock market, or so say the pundits who advise individual investors.

But anyone who anticipated a market meltdown and bought into a bear fund in recent months will have made money last week, provided they sold in time.

Investors who put money into bear funds are gambling on a declining stock market because the funds are structured so that the value rises in proportion to the stock market's decline.

Bear funds are all about timing. Conrad Preece, associate director at Govett Asset Management says: "Bear funds are not for the long-term investor because generally equity markets go up over time."

"We would expect investors to use bear funds strategically, either to hedge themselves against a long position or because they feel the market is overvalued and ready for a correction."

In the bull run that has characterised the US and UK stock markets of recent years,

Happy as a bear coming out to play

bear funds have performed abysmally.

If you invested £1,000 in the Govett UK Bear fund at its inception in 1994, it would have been worth only £537.17 in early October. The same amount invested in October 1, 1996 would have been worth only £789.21 a year later, according to search by Microcap.

In contrast, the same amount put in River & Mercantile MBF Fund, one of the least successful UK growth funds in the last year,

would have risen to £1,145.30 in the same period. A similar investment in top ranking Exeter Capital Growth would have risen to £1,609.42.

But anyone with the foresight to have put £1,000 into the Govett UK bear fund on October 3 and removed it last Monday would have seen their stake rise by 18.3 per cent by the close of trade on October 26 (although the total return will have been diminished by the fund's charges). And investors who think the market has further to fall, and

that this week's recovery is unlikely to hold, will put money in bear funds. There are very few bear funds open to individual investors in the United Kingdom. Govett operates the only two that have low enough entry levels to appeal to the smaller investor.

The funds—the UK Bear and US Bear funds—are authorised unit trusts. They are classified as futures and options funds, and futures are used to manage the portfolio. The United Kingdom fund uses the FTSE 100 futures contract and the United States fund uses the S&P 500 futures contract.

"If the investor in the street had a couple of thousand pounds in equities, perhaps from windfall shares, and if two weeks ago he had thought the market was due for some short-term downward volatility, he could have invested in the fund, taken his profits on Tuesday and been very happy," says Mr Preece.

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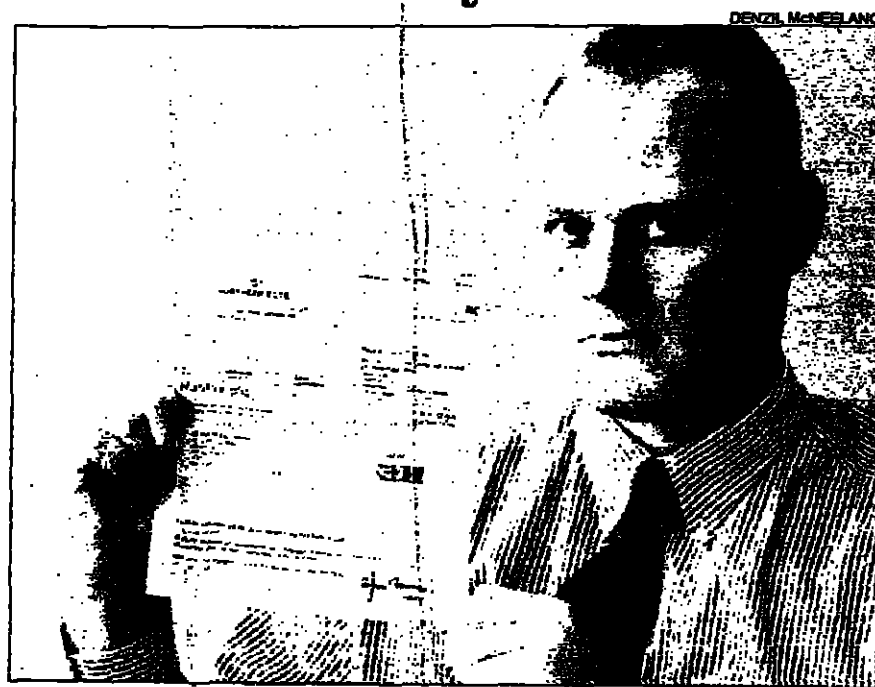
Expensive lesson for tardy shareholder

Phil Anderson has experienced at first hand the vagaries of the stock market. He had planned to sell his windfall shares and use the proceeds as a deposit on a flat.

The events of the past week have tested his nerve as he saw the prices of bank shares hammered. Among the biggest casualties have been the newly-converted banks, Halifax and Northern Rock, in which he has holdings.

At their peak, Halifax shares were 778p, but have fallen this week to 685p. Northern Rock's high was 504p but it ended the week at 471p. A member of both societies with the basic allocation from each would have seen the total value of his holding fall £350 from its peak to be worth about £3,700.

Mr Anderson, 28, said: "I would have received more than £4,000 if I had sold both lots of shares at the top of the market. I kept reading reports that the market looked high but I never got round to doing anything about it. When the shares were first issued I had not seen any properties I liked. There were



so few decent flats on the market that I thought it would take ages to find one. Now I wish I had just banked the money. I am going to borrow the money from my parents and pay them back

later when the market rises again." His colleague, Dan Lucas, 19, sold his windfall shares and pocketed £1,600 which he is spending on a trip to New Zealand and

Australia in February. Mr Anderson said: "He sold out when the market was high but I am kicking myself for not doing the same."

MARIANNE CURPHEY

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FEATURE



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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1 1997

THE TIMES WEEKEND

Edward's glittering cast for golden wedding gala

The Prince tells Bill Frost of his plans to entertain the greatest gathering of royals since the Queen's Coronation

For the past year, courtship and weddings have been very much on the mind of Prince Edward, the Queen's youngest son and the only one of her children still to marry. However, this is business, not pleasure, despite Fleet Street's determined attempts to propel him up the aisle with Sophie Rhys-Jones as soon as possible.

Given the media obsession with their employer's love life, staff at the central London headquarters of his production company, Ardent, are naturally wary of the press. One senses slight disapproval and suspicion while waiting for an audience with him.

The feeling is banished as he bounds, beaming, from his office. He is tall, suntanned and disarmingly amicable, even apologising for being a little late. The cavalry twill trousers and suede shoes are slightly at odds with the hint of expensive cologne and gold signet ring inscribed with an "E". But then, this is the Theatrical Royal: more media mogul than farm manager.

His office is bright, airy and obviously worked in. A bottle of champagne sits unopened beneath a desk piled with papers. He smiles again before explaining why his thoughts have been so taken up with affairs of the heart. But this is not the stuff of tabloid splashes.

The Prince's preoccupation this past year has been with organising the golden jubilee celebration of his parents' marriage at Westminster Abbey 50 years ago, a ceremony which restored joy and pageantry to gloomy postwar Britain. "Millions will welcome this joyous

event as a flash of colour on the hard road we have had to travel," said Winston Churchill at the time, with customary prescience.

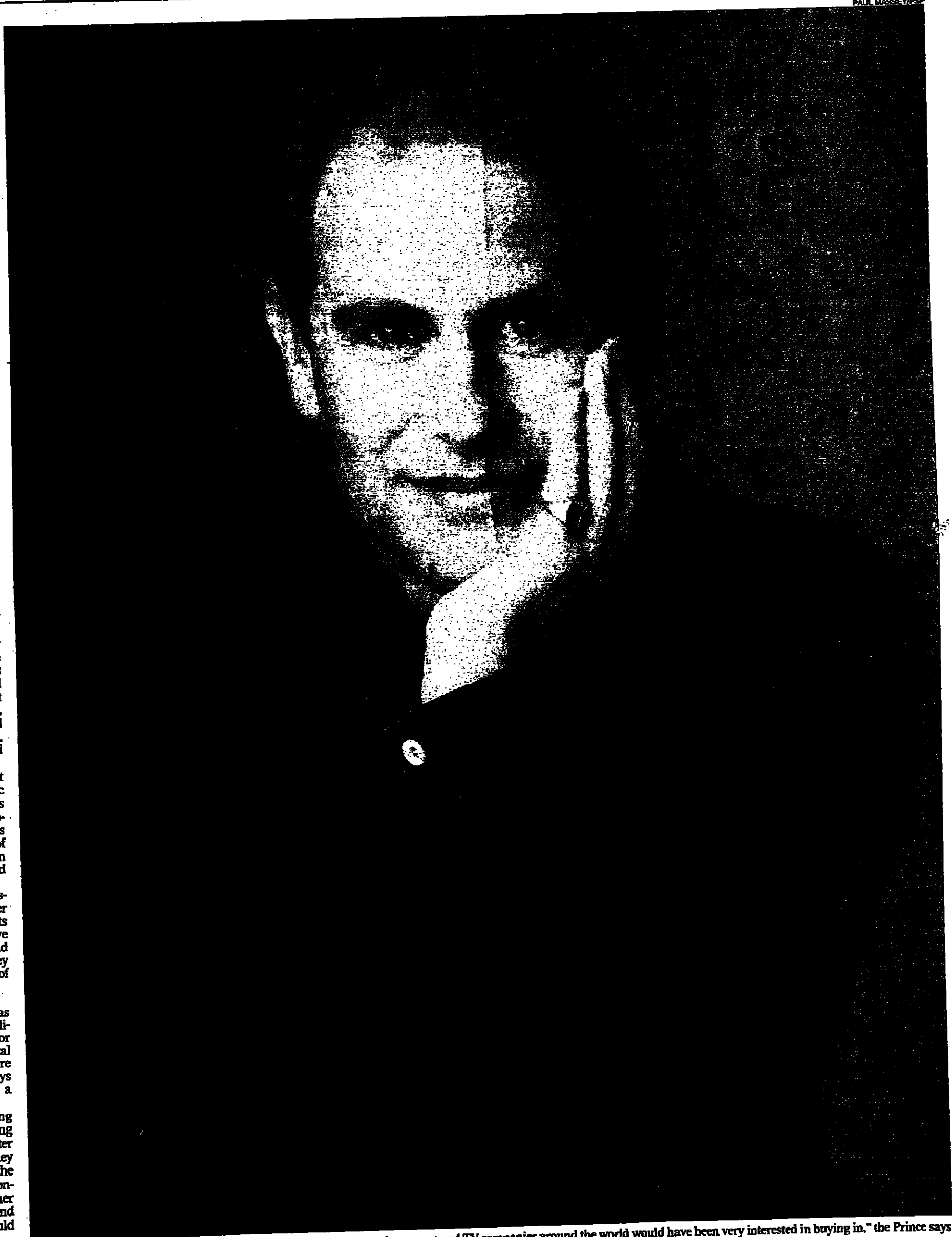
The morning of November 20, 1947, dawned damp and grey. Mist hung over the streets of London and the cold seemed to penetrate the bone. Yet around Buckingham Place, heavily wrapped people had slept all night on pavements, and thousands more gathered to stand shivering for hours.

Although the day had not been declared an official public holiday, the capital saw its biggest crowds since the Coronation of George VI, ten years earlier. After the dark years of war and austerity, the nation longed for glamour and spectacle.

Elizabeth, the Princess destined to be Queen, and her Prince were to become parents and grandparents but, above all, a symbol of unity and stability for their subjects. They provided the perfect example of the permanence of marriage.

Sadly, that model has been difficult to replicate, especially for members of the Royal Family. However, there is more than nostalgia for bygone days and mores to celebrate half a century later.

Prince Edward began laying plans for the golden wedding celebrations last October after asking his parents how they would most like to mark the anniversary. "I thought a concert that would bring together the Queen, the Duke and members of the public would



Continued on page 3

"It is a shame [the BBC is not screening the gala] because this is a unique event and TV companies around the world would have been very interested in buying in," the Prince says

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Kennedys' voyage to promised land

Ireland's largest sailing ship is being re-created in memory of its emigrants, John Young reports

Almost 150 years ago, with Ireland ravaged by famine, a young couple joined the crowd on the quay at the little port of New Ross, in Co Wexford. Patrick Kennedy and his wife Bridget, having said goodbye to their families just a few miles down the road, were setting off to seek a new life in America.

Little more than a century later their great-grandson, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, was inaugurated as the 35th President of the United States, promising an era of unprecedented peace, progress and prosperity. Perhaps no world leader has ever embodied such high hopes, made all the more poignant by the tragedy, disappointment and disgrace that have since enveloped America's most famous family.

There is no shrine at the ancestral home. There is a memorial park some miles away, but tourists arriving at the little family cottage beside a narrow, winding country lane are in for a disappointment. There are no mementoes or family portraits — as if peasant farmers in the Ireland of the 1840s could afford to have their portraits painted — and not even a reashop or a bar serving Guinness.

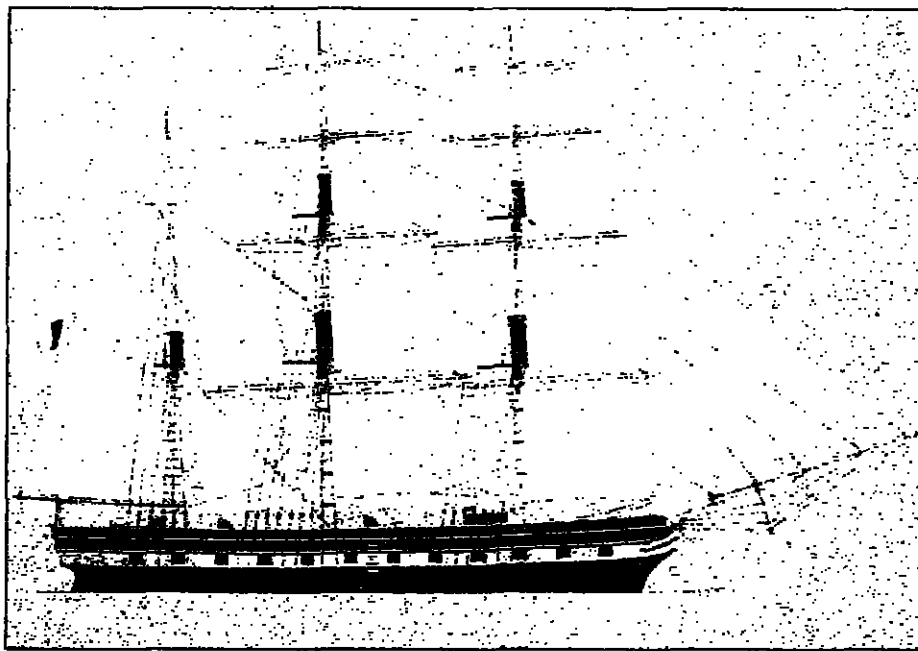
However, on the other side of the river a memorial is being created in the shape of a great sailing ship. *Dunbrody*, the largest ever built in the



Family reunion: John F. Kennedy (centre) visited relations in Ireland in 1963. Along with his sister, Jean Smith, are his cousin Mary Ryan and her daughters



Jean Kennedy Smith and Michael Smurfit with a replica of the famine ship under construction in Co Wexford



Irish Republic. Measuring 170ft long and weighing 458 tons, with masts up to 80ft high, she is scheduled to make her maiden voyage to Boston, Massachusetts, in 1999, exactly a century and a half since JFK's great-grandparents set out as penniless emigrants.

Dunbrody is a replica of one of hundreds of similar vessels built during the first half of the 19th century to carry cargo from North America in Europe. Most were constructed on the western side of the Atlantic because of the availability of raw materials. The original *Dunbrody* was built in Quebec City to bring much-needed timber from the Canadian forests. Britain's domestic supply having been depleted by the demands of the Napoleonic wars and the expansion of the Fleet.

Shipowners were happy to exploit a new cargo to fill their vessels on the return journey, in the shape of thousands of emigrants travelling from

Britain, Ireland and other parts of Europe to the New World. The so-called famine ships were quick and cheap to construct and, travelling fully loaded in both directions, were hugely profitable until they were superseded by larger and faster steamships.

For generations New Ross was a thriving port with a busy shipyard. But with the recent closure of the yard, and the loss of container traffic to Waterford, 15 miles closer to the sea, it declined into recession. The reopening of the former dry dock, after it became flooded by tonnes of silt, was an act of faith.

The dock, adjoining a cluster of oil tanks and other industrial detritus, is not the most prepossessing setting for a romantic enterprise. But as the structure takes shape beneath a public viewing platform, there is an infectious enthusiasm in the air.

The crossing from Europe to New England or to the St Lawrence took anything from four to seven weeks — the return journey was generally faster, thanks to the prevailing westerlies — and most ships could be expected to recoup their costs within two years.

In the 1840s, famine in Ireland and recession in Britain, combined with a big increase in transatlantic shipping and competition among shipowners, stimulated a drastic reduction in fares. From £12 in 1810 the cheapest steerage passage fell to £3.10s (£3.50), although this could be increased at short notice if demand exceeded supply. Fares to British North America (Canada) were also subsidised by the British government, which was anxious to encourage loyalist settlers.

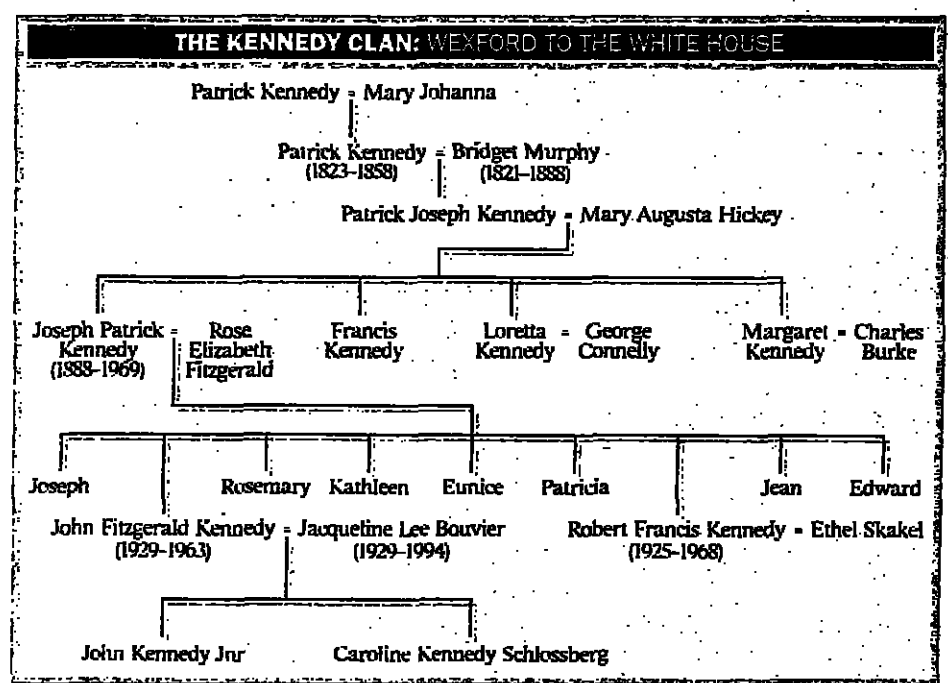
The grace and beauty of the sailing vessels frequently disguised appalling conditions on board. Steerage passengers



The illustration *Package Ship* shows emigrants leaving for America on July 6, 1850

had to bring their own provisions for a voyage lasting several weeks and suffered horribly from hunger, disease and lack of hygiene.

It was the superior quality of the *Dunbrody*, and the fact that her history was so well documented, that prompted her choice as the model for the new vessel. *The Washington*



Irving, in which the Kennedys actually arrived in Boston from Liverpool on April 22, 1849, was an inferior craft.

The project was initiated by the JFK Trust, set up in 1988, after the closure of the shipyard, to stimulate development and bring new jobs to the area. But it was decided that she should be much more than

a tourist attraction, permanently at anchor. She would be a full-scale sea-going vessel built to the highest standards, with a professional crew supplemented by volunteers willing to pay for the experience of crossing the Atlantic under sail. The architect is Culin Mudie, one of Britain's most distinguished marine design-

ers and historians, who acted as a consultant during the raising of the Tudor warship *Mary Rose*. Although the original architect's drawings have long since disappeared, Mudie had no difficulty recreating the lines, using "logic and imagination".

More than half the £3 million cost of the project is being met by the European Union's regional development fund. Other money has come from government-funded job creation schemes and corporate sponsors.

Although the *Dunbrody* will symbolise an important period in Irish history, Sean Reilly, the project manager, is anxious not to harp on the tragic aspects of the famine. He says: "Ninety-seven per cent of these young people reached their destinations safely and, by hard work and enterprise, helped to build great new countries and cities. That is surely something to be proud of."

ROLL CALL

From famine to fame and fortune

The endless list of Irish emigrants who fled the famine to make their fame and fortune in America includes presidents and film stars, Supreme Court justices, senators, bishops and captains of industry. More than 40 million American citizens can now claim ancestral roots in Ireland.

The father of Henry Ford, for example, sailed from Cork to Quebec and then travelled on to Detroit in 1847, two years before Patrick Kennedy left Co Wexford for Boston. Ancestors of Jimmy Cagney, Hollywood's tough man, were among the first wave of immigrants when the famine struck in Ireland. Princess Grace of Monaco's



Princess Grace



F. Scott Fitzgerald

forebears were also Irish. F. Scott Fitzgerald, the author, Eugene O'Neill, the playwright, John Ford, the film director, Tip O'Neill and Tom Foley, Speakers of the House of Representatives, are all descended from Irish stock, as are Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton.

Both Chicago and Los Angeles have Irish-American mayors, and the Kennedys continue to dominate political life. While John F. Kennedy was the first Irish Catholic President and his brother, Robert, the US Attorney General, other members of the family are still powerbrokers. Senator Edward Kennedy remains a force on Capitol Hill, where Congressman Joe Kennedy is a proponent of Irish issues. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend is Lieutenant Governor of Maryland. Jean Kennedy Smith is the United States Ambassador to Ireland and John Kennedy Jr is editor and co-founder of *George*, the hip political journal.

TOM RHODES

Discover how delicious a good night's sleep can be.

If you suffer from sleeplessness, here's a way to help you relax into sleep. Slumber Cup is made from B vitamins and flavoured with fruit juices, herbs and spices. Taken as a hot drink, it's an ideal way to get ready for a good night's rest.

It's widely available at all Seven Seas stockists, so why not turn to Slumber Cup before you turn in.

SEVEN SEAS
Helps you relax into sleep.



Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip and the wedding party in the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace. The best man, the Marquess of Milford Haven is to the left of the bride. Bridesmaids, left to right: the Hon Margaret Elphinstone, Lady Pamela Mountbatten, Lady Mary Cambridge, Princess Alexandra of Kent, Princess Margaret.

Lady Carolyn Montagu-Douglas-Scott, Lady Elizabeth Lambert and Miss Diana Bowes-Lyon. Pages: Prince William of Gloucester (left) and Prince Michael of Kent. Front row, left to right: Queen Mary, Princess Alice (Prince Philip's mother), King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, and the Dowager Marchioness of Milford Haven.

Continued from page 1
be appropriate, and everybody said "yes, what a good idea."

Impeccable theatrical connections have enabled him to put together a glittering cast of musicians and actors for the Royal Gala at the Festival Hall on November 19. Appropriately, the theme is marriage.

"The most phenomenal number of people have become involved in what started out as a relatively simple idea," Prince Edward told *The Times*. "As the discussions progressed, we decided this should be a celebration of the arts — film, ballet and opera. But you soon realise that 12 months is not a long time to put something like this together, and there are no second chances to get things right."

Collaborating with Trevor Nunn, Nicholas Snowman and Hugh Woodbridge — "among the very best in the business" — the Prince's programme is as elaborate as the finest Elizabethan masque.

Nunn has devised a production which celebrates courtship, romance, childbirth and constancy. The format marries Shakespeare's plays and sonnets with the music his work has inspired. Andrew Davis is to conduct the overture to Weber's *Oberon*, and the love duet from Verdi's *Otello*. There's Cole Porter, too: *Brush Up Your Shakespeare* and *Kiss Me Kate*, taken from the musical and based on *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Cleo Laine and John Darkworth will perform two sonnets in musical settings, while Dame Diana Rigg reads Sonnet No. 116: "Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds Admit Impediment". Ian Holm will read Polonius's welcome to the players in a scene from *Hamlet*.

Among other highlights in the 90-minute programme are extracts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Tonight from Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and Berlioz's love duet from *Les Troyens*, also inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*.

"The choice of pieces was very much a joint decision by the production team, but the Queen and the Duke's choice obviously were taken into account," the Prince says. "Shakespeare seemed appropriate, even though the production is driven by music."

"As for favourite pieces, I'd sooner wait until the night to say which went down best. Mine is a watching brief now and there are no dress rehearsals: the performers are practising their lines in their bedrooms — it will be all right on the night."

"As far as I am aware, all the crowned heads of Europe will be here for the ball, the banquet and the ball. We can't put them all up at Buckingham Palace, there simply aren't enough rooms. So some will be staying aboard *Britannia* in the Port of London. I suppose you could say it was

the Royal Yacht's swansong," he adds rather wistfully.

It will be the largest gathering of crowned heads of state in Britain since the Coronation in 1953, or even since the wedding itself. Most of them will be cousins, descended from Queen Victoria, who basked in her reputation as the "grandmother of Europe".

Among the Queen's second cousins will be King Harald of Norway and ex-King Constantine of Greece, with his wife Anne-Marie, a third cousin. Other third cousins attending include Alexander, Crown Prince of Yugoslavia, King Carl Gustav of Sweden, Queen Margrethe of Denmark and King Juan Carlos of Spain.

Despite the presence of such a distinguished audience, the

Prince remains calm. "I'm not nervous," he says, "but I cannot speak for the cast."

Certainly there were nerves on the royal wedding day itself. Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, Royal Navy, was said to have downed a large G&T with his best man shortly after waking on that cold, grey November morning. In the event, there was no need to worry: it was a production of seamless perfection. The wedding, one American journalist wrote, "jerked millions out of their one-candlepower lives and tossed them into dreamland".

Princess Elizabeth had been granted 100 extra clothing coupons for her trousseau: her eight bridesmaids, including Princess Margaret and Princess Alexandra, were given an

extra 23 coupons each. Ten thousand costume pearls were sewn on to the white satin Norman Hartnell wedding dress to form garlands of York roses and ears of corn.

The bride did not escape without some pre-wedding hitches. Among them, the sunny tiara she wore to hold back her hairdresser snapped as it was being put on. A jeweller rushed the piece away for immediate repair.

Prince Philip wore his naval uniform, with the Star of the Garter, which had been presented to him the day before by the King. In that ceremony, he was also created Baron of Greenwich, Earl of Merioneth and Duke of Edinburgh. Before the wedding, Philip, who had been baptised in the Greek Orthodox Church, was

formally received into the Church of England.

He did not have to worry about buying a wedding ring. It was made from a nugget of Welsh gold, a gift from the people of the principality.

Princess Elizabeth had left Buckingham Palace on time, 11.16am precisely. By then, her husband was already at Westminster Abbey, where 2,500 guests had gathered.

"The expression in the eyes of the King was that of any father who is filled at once with pride in the daughter he is handing into another's care and with unfeigned delight in the happiness she has found," *The Times* reported next day.

After the signing of the register, the bride and groom walked hand in hand down the line of guests. "With joy in

their eyes and pride and hope in their mien, they passed down through the choir and nave and went out to meet the plaudits of the people," *The Times* reported. "The welcome was tumultuous..."

At Buckingham Palace, the newlyweds and their guests sat down to a wedding breakfast in the State Dining Room. Concerned by what she had heard about rationing in Britain, an American child had a live turkey delivered to the palace.

There were 12 official wedding cakes; the main one, a 9ft-high, 900lb, four-tier creation made by McVitie and Price, was cut by the Princess with her husband's naval sword.

In those days of rationing, the wedding presents on display at St James's Palace included 500 cases of tinned pineapple from the government of Queensland, hundreds of pairs of nylon stockings and a traycloth spun and woven by Mahatma Gandhi. Queen Mary was concerned by the present from the sub-continent. She pronounced the gift "indelicate", thinking the Princess had been presented with a loin cloth.

Millions of people had listened to every detail of the ceremony on the radio. Half a century on, Prince Edward is too discreet to express more than mild disappointment that the BBC has not seen fit to record the celebration of his parents' anniversary.

He says: "It is a shame; this is a unique event and television companies around the world would have been very interested in buying in."

"We at Ardent said we would do it and I had very clear ideas about what I wanted, and very clear ideas about the production team we would put together."

"But the public can still be a part of what is essentially a public event. Tickets are available for the gala and I really want to encourage people to come along."

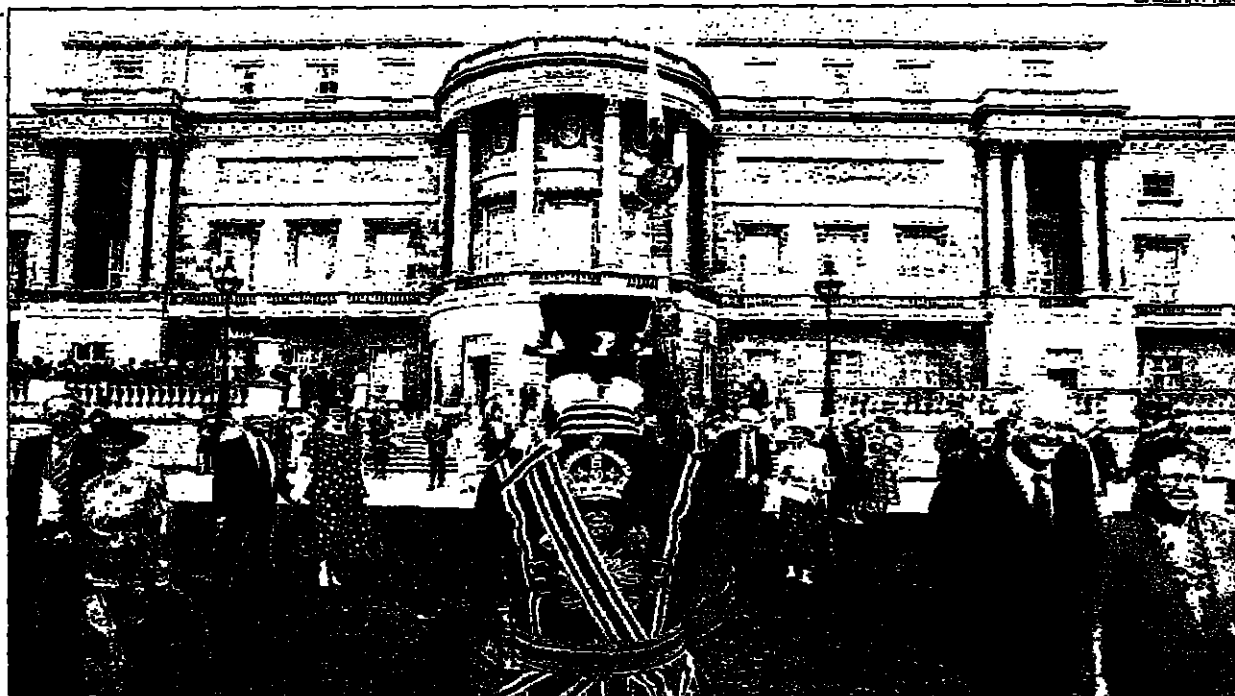
"If they miss the gala, on Thursday, November 20, the day of the anniversary, there will be a service at Westminster Abbey and afterwards the Queen and the Duke will do a walkabout before lunch at the Banqueting House."

"Then there is a ball at Windsor, the first such event since the fire five years ago. Obviously though, that is a family celebration."

So, has such intimate and time-consuming involvement with planning his parent's golden wedding celebrations turned the Prince's mind to the subject of his own marriage?

"I know when the interview is over," he says with a resigned sigh. "Someone always asks when I intend to get married."

● Tickets for the Royal Gala are available from the Festival Hall box office. Prices are from £10 to £400 (the latter including dinner). For further information call 0171-960 4242.



The royal golden wedding celebrations started early with an Anniversary Garden Party at the Palace last July

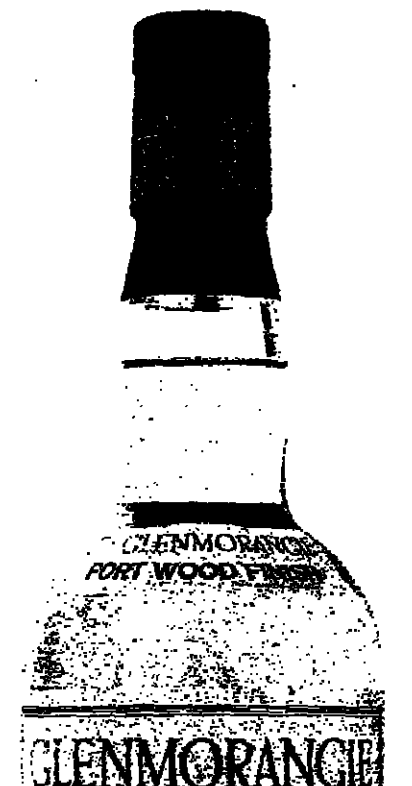


Royal Gala guests. 1 to 4: Queen Sonja and King Harald of Norway, and King Carl Gustav and Queen Sylvia of Sweden



Also present at the gala night: Queen Sophie and King Juan Carlos of Spain, and Queen Noor and King Hussein of Jordan

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Ellison's Chemists in a converted stables in Barnsley, Yorkshire

Howzat for beating Delhi belly?

Michael Cable meets cricket umpire Dickie Bird and the chemist who keeps him fit at the wicket

Umpiring a World Cup cricket match at Bangalore in India, with the sun nudging the temperature to 110F and more than 85,000 fans going delirious all around the ground, is no time to get caught short by a sudden attack of "Delhi Belly".

This is one good reason why globe-trotting Dickie Bird, the world's most famous cricket umpire, would never dream of flying off abroad without first visiting Bryan Ellison, his local chemist back home in Barnsley, Yorkshire. "He has always looked after me, making sure I'm well stocked up with all the pills and other stuff I need to keep going," Mr Bird says.

When he retired from international cricket last year at the age of 64, Mr Bird had officiated in a record number of 66 Test matches, 92 one-day internationals and three World Cup finals. One series of matches took him around the world in 30 days and he has regularly found himself in places where "the runs" have nothing to do with cricket.

"As the umpire, I just couldn't afford to get ill in the middle of a match," says Mr Bird, who is accompanied everywhere by a large bag of medications supplied by his



old friend Mr Ellison. These include everything from industrial-strength cod-liver oil to keep his joints well lubricated, kaolin tablets for the stomach, a Listerine gargle to ease chronic sinus problems exacerbated by dust thrown up from dry pitches, pills for the travel sickness from which he suffers very badly, malaria tablets and assorted painkillers, throat pastilles and tonics.

Mr Ellison, who was one of the guests when Mr Bird appeared on *This Is Your Life*, says: "It's not that he's a hypochondriac. He is just very conscientious and wants to do everything he can to stay fit. Otherwise, he would feel he had let the side down."

Theirs is more than just an over-the-counter relationship. They grew up together in Barnsley, and Mr Bird, the son of a miner, was born



Dickie Bird with Bryan Ellison in his shop. "Bryan has always looked after me, making sure I'm well stocked up with all the pills I need"

and grew up 200 yards from where Mr Ellison now has his premises in a converted stable block. It is an old-fashioned, no-nonsense pharmacy that doesn't believe in trying to sell such products as cosmetics and shampoos. "People who are ill don't want to wait for someone to choose a lipstick before they get their prescription," Mr Ellison says.

Mr Bird often pops in simply to pass the time, and the two of them retire to an upstairs room for a chat. "I like to think that this is a haven for him where he can come and talk things over," Mr Ellison says, recalling the time when Mr Bird was agonising over whether to accept a lucrative offer to join the Kerry Packer cricket circus. He turned it down in the end, as

he did a rebel tour to South Africa. "I was offered a lot of money, enough to keep me comfortably for many years, but I think I made the right decision," he reflects. "I couldn't turn my back on the established game I was brought up with."

Mr Bird was a useful batsman with both Yorkshire and Leicestershire until a knee injury forced him to retire at 32, but it wasn't until he donned the umpire's white coat that he became a star, universally respected by the players for his judgment, and adored by the public for his idiosyncratic style.

Good umpires are born, not made, he thinks. "It's a gift from the good Lord," he says, adding that he has a very strong religious faith. "Apart from that, it's mainly a matter of concentration, common sense and a belief in your own

judgment. The players have taken to me because I've always treated them with respect and they have returned that respect. I chat to them all and I try to smile a bit. Sport, after all, should be about enjoyment."

He is effortlessly impartial on the field. "It never really enters my mind who's 'bowling' and who's 'batting'," he insists. He would, nevertheless, love to see England do well. He says: "The reason the Australians are so good is that they play hard and they are mentally tough. Our players need to be the same and to start believing in themselves. We need an all-rounder to replace Ian Botham and we need a supreme like Mike Brearley. With him at the helm, I am certain that English cricket would be lifted out of

the doldrums." Mr Bird has one last season in county cricket before he retires. An emotional man, he shed tears when he walked out at Lords to umpire his final Test, and the handkerchief will no doubt be out again when he draws stumps for the last time. "Cricket has been my life, that's why I never married. I was married to cricket," he says, adding that his only regret in life is that he has not had a family.

"It will be a wrench when I have to call it a day but I hope to be involved in the game in some way. Apart from that, I'll just go on travelling the world and watching cricket." And still taking the tablets, no doubt.

• Bryan Ellison, Chemist, 17 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley S70 2LT (01226 281000; open Mon-Fri 8.30am-6.30pm, Sat 8.30am-12.30pm.

BARGAINS

There are bargains to be had at markets, boot sales, junk shops and stalls all over the country. With £100, what would you buy?

BRIGHTON may be the courtesan of the south coast and Eastbourne the grande dame, but Hastings is the bag lady and it's here you should head for cheap furniture. Search out the old High Street (near the fisherman's huts) where you will find a plethora of junk shops.

Two of my favourites are Anker Antiques at no 47, and Browner's at no 57. Anker Antiques is the



Leather cases for £12

smaller of the two, but don't let that put you off. The day I went, nearly every inch of space was filled with fine gilt and wood French sofas and chairs. A set of dining chairs in need of restoration was on offer at £85. But the real finds were the battered old leather cases for £12, engraved water syphons for £6, wooden boxes from £10, and wonderful old kitchenware, including moulds from £2.

Browner's has six times the space and ten times as much furniture, stretching it to bursting point. Here I was tempted by two chests of drawers - £95 the pair; a sideboard for £75.

It took three tours of the shop before I made my final choice: a 1940s bureau for £49; upholstered bedroom stool for £15 and two plaster cherub heads for £30. And there was still money left over for fish and chips.

HELEN CHISLETT

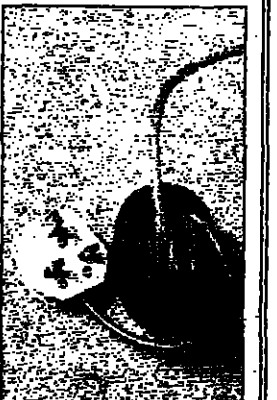
• Browner's, 57 High Street, Hastings, East Sussex (01424 36455). Anker Antiques & Collectibles, 47 High Street, Hastings, East Sussex (01424 332039).

GADGETS

"IN THE home, trailing cables are accidents in waiting," warns the blurb for Cable Rollers. These look like hollow yoyos into which surplus cable can be reeled by the tidy-minded.

Since my house seems to have more dangling wires and cables than the London Electricity Board, I felt sure Cable Rollers would come in handy. But the squashed brown balls look little better than a few lengths of wire, which are usually tucked out of sight anyway. The Cable Roller is not suitable for mains cables, only those carrying less than 1,000 Watts.

In contrast, most houses now have a proliferation of remote control



Cable Rollers

handsets, like those for the television, hi-fi and satellite box. The One For All 6 remote promises to replace up to six units with one, but the idea soon ran aground in practice.

Keying in codes for each piece of hardware should be simple, but I couldn't find the code for my big-screen JVC hi-fi. As I started to call the helpline, it struck me that, even if all the hardware was married to the One For All 6, the full range of options would be omitted in the downsizing process, and few couch potatoes can accept that.

TIM WAPSHOTT

• Cable Rollers £8.95 for three, plus p&p, from The Maritime Company (01993 770450). One For All 6 remote £39.95, plus p&p, from Innovations (0940 807000).

A pocketful of silver

When buying a hip flask it is important to bear in mind how you use your pockets. Lots of men never recover from their schoolboy habit of stuffing their trousers with conkers, bits of string, matchbox cars and protractors. The ingredients might change with age, but the habit of stuffing can last a lifetime.

Another consideration is how much you drink. There are those who like to keep copious draughts on board as they wade through the duck hunting grounds of the west of Ireland. Then there are the phoebes who want the odd, naughty sip while whacking off a few rounds at

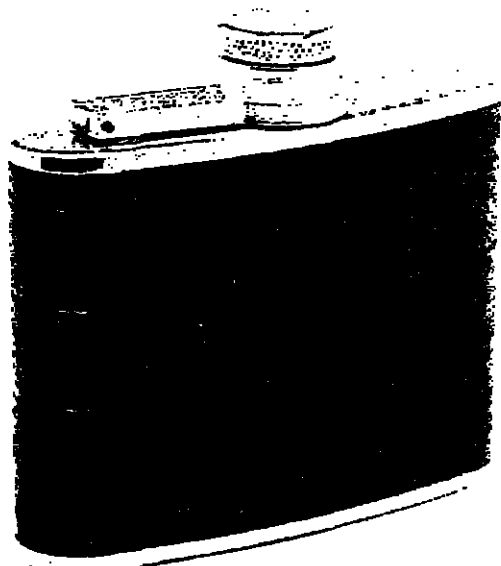
HIP FLASKS

a suburban shooting range. To each, however, a flask. When filled, the Cartridge Flask looks like a bottle of scent - or worse, something a doctor might provide. At £299, it is good value, but if you have an image to maintain, you might be better off with a pocket of miniatures. Another gimmick is Initial Ideas' cigar case, converted to hold both tobacco and alcohol. Although it looks the part, a couple of glugs and you will be gasping for replenishment. The wise virgin should opt

for the Mulberry hip flask, which is comfortably classic as well as being warm in the palm. The Brats flask may look good, but it requires toggles and all sorts of knotting skills: the Tufnell Tweed version would make a ghillie squirm, while the Tesco cylinder flask looks like a cocktail shaker. Martinis can have many effects on the drinker, but cockle-warming is not one of them.

Which leaves the Asprey flask. Country sports types have noses as well honed to sniff vulgarity as blood. Whoever arrived with a £1,900 flask could find the moors a hostile place indeed.

PHILIP DELVES BROUGHTON



ABOVE: Mulberry's 4oz hip flask, £85 in walnut leather, darkens with age and even looks good when stained by alcohol. The lid is attached, which makes it useful when struggling with gloves (0171 493 2546).



LEFT: Round steel hip flask, £55, from Holland & Holland (0171-408 7979). Surprisingly flat and comfortable; an extra £58 buys you a similarly shaped collapsible pocket cup.

RIGHT: Tufnell Tweeds' (01444 483200) whisky flask, £35, comes in Frinton or Kildborough tweed to complement most traditional hunting outfits.



RIGHT: The roped hip flask, £21.99, from Brats (0171-351 7674), has a rope handle, making it easy to carry from a toggle or belt; it is also small enough to slip into a pocket.

RIGHT: The cartridge-shaped tot flask, £22.99, is small enough to fit in a cartridge belt - an ideal shooting accompaniment as long as you don't mistake it for the real thing. From The Finishing Touch (01235 772853).

ABOVE: The black hunting flask, £40, from Tesco Direct (0800 403403/www.tesco.co.uk/direct), holds up to 10oz and, with two stainless steel cups, is useful for sharing with friends. Comes with a shoulder carrying case.

Going hell for leather

It is not only biker's chicks who are swathed in hip-hugging leather jeans, studded padded-shouldered jackets and thigh-high leather boots this season. Designers have taken a shine to the natural softness, yet tough-cookie appeal of hide and are using it in both casual and elegant collections, from tasselled and weathered jackets to eveningwear embellished with beads and brocade.

Leather may be synonymous with wildness, youth and sexual abandon, evoking the days of Marianne Faithfull in *Girl on a Motorcycle* or Diana Rigg in *The Avengers*, but according to the designer Antonio Berardi it "timeless, expensive necessity that cannot be ignored". It is a reflection of a new "deluxe way of dressing", he says, that is elegant, chic and merely whispers "attitude".

Unlike the Seventies, when leather was patched, dyed and sewn together in multicoloured patchworks, the Eighties when it was white and bejewelled, or the early Nineties when designers such as Versace embellished it with gold, tassels and a hefty price tag, the late Nineties look is pared down, elegant and relatively inexpensive.

The clothes are not only unembellished, they are simply styled and sharply cut, emphasising the texture and softness of the material. Jackets are tailored to fit the body, with simple lapels and fitted sleeves; trousers are slimline, with minimal detailing. Dresses are strapless, figure-hugging and cut to flatter womanly curves.

It is a look embraced by almost every designer: Ralph Lauren has simple black T-shirt shift dresses; Joseph has black mini-skirts; Hermès high-high slit, ankle-length skirts; Clements Ribetto

bejewelled evening dresses; Jil Sander pearl-coloured jackets. High-street chains are embracing the colours and styles flaunted on the catwalks: "bandeau" dresses, micro skirts, shorts, hipsters and jeans in every hue from chocolate browns and blacks to mid-night blues, lipstick reds, yellows and even raspberry pinks.

For fashion freaks who will not even consider wearing leather, there is a range of authentic-looking fakes on the high streets: faux snakeskin, shiny plastic, PVC, and even rubber, many for less than £100. Markets are also stuffed with good secondhand jackets, pants and shirts in Seventies styles which can be easily updated with toned-down contemporary touches.

Worn with understated jewellery, this year's essential killer heels and lots of attitude, it is a look that every Nineties girl can get away with, whether it's worn for clubbing or smartened up for the office.

Leather doesn't mean you will instantly turn into a sex kitten. But with its soft, natural feel, its figure-hugging snugness, and that high-inducing smell, it is irresistible.

LISA GRAINGER



Black leatherette strapless dress, £55, Warehouse, selected branches (0171-278 3491). Pink Lurex cardigan, £59, Kookai, as below



Photographs by Richard Burns. Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hanford (0171-495 7774). Styling by Amanda Uppel



Chocolate metallic PVC coat, £119.99; matching trousers, £59.99, Morgan, branches nationwide (0171-383 2888). Mustard fine wool crêpe-knit vest, £149, TSE, Harvey Nichols, London SW1; Liberty, W1; Harrods, SW1 (0171-263 4433). Olive leather, £44.99, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-436 3126)



ABOVE: black soft-leather jacket with Velcro fastening, £1,180; matching ankle-zip trousers, £709, Gucci, 33 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 2716). Black stretch sparkle vest, £39.99, Kookai, branches nationwide (0171-937 4411)

LEFT: brown studded-leather jacket, £800, Plain Sud, 12 St Christopher's, Finsbury, W1; Harrods, SW1 (0171-487 4484). Pale camel rollneck, £34.99, Kookai, as before. Brown soft leather, side-split belted skirt, £320, John Richmond, Selldiges, W1 (0171-978 5278). Pale brown leather boots, £175, Russell & Bromley, selected branches nationwide (0171-629 6803)

RIGHT: Burgundy stretch lace T-shirt, £39.99, Kookai, as before. Metallic blue mini skirt, £29.99, Morgan, as below



THREE OF A KIND

IF YOU don't want to go the whole hog and wear an entire leather outfit, a hint of hide will do. Simple, soft-leather clutch bags are not only big enough for daytime, but chic enough for evening. Here are three of the best. LG

Chocolate leather Peron clutch bag, £295, Mulberry, 41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900)

Gold leather clutch bag, £49.99, Klen, Alders, branches nationwide (0181-681 2577)

Red soft leather clutch bag, £80, Dollargrand, Harrods, SW1 (0171-794 3028)

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The couple who are going to seed

Barbara Abbs meets the Archibalds, who dice with danger to preserve rare plants

Most gardeners are placid people. They reserve their greatest passions for daffodils and azaleas, and their hatred for aphids and slugs. But I wonder if a frisson passes through either the Alpine Garden Society, the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh or ecologically correct conservation bureaucrats when Jim and Jenny Archibald's new seed list appears? They might have good reason to. Most commercial catalogues do not begin with "Who cares?". Nor do they go on to attack the administrators of our botanic gardens, now in thrall to fundraisers and dispensing with "curators".

Alongside the descriptions of their travels and detailed notes on plant habitats the couple's lively newsletter gives accounts of Mr Archibald's sparring with the Alpine Garden Society, the present "horto-botanical establishment" and the authors of any books that he considers inadequately researched.

And in recent years he has vigorously defended himself and fellow collectors against those conservationists who object to any form of seed collecting.

Although the collecting of plants has a long history, the gathering of seed has not been so popular. The first gardeners to receive seed of exotic species frequently failed to get it to germinate. Some need precise treatment — for example, periods of stratification in very low temperatures, or being kept in the dark. Discovering the problem was a matter of trial and error. It was easier to keep actual plants alive.

But ecological correctness was one problem that the early plant collectors, such as David Douglas and Frank Kingdon Ward and Pere David, didn't have. Then, whole mule trains staggering under loads of shrubs and bulbs were not considered worthy of comment. Now the world is a more sensitive place.

However, Mr Archibald feels strongly that criticism of professional seed collectors is misplaced. A seed collector would, he says, have to return to the same square yard and remove every seed head, year after year, to destroy a species. In his opinion, the main threat to plant species worldwide is over-grazing by animals. In America there is often too many cattle per acre to allow some species to flourish, and the same can be true of sheep in Wales. The other big threat is from development.

In some cases, gathering the seed of rare species and cultivating it in other parts of the world has ensured its survival. The blue Chilean crocus, *Teophilaea cyanocrocus*, was extremely rare



Jim and Jenny Archibald on a seed-collecting expedition in the Van province of Turkey. The province is a no-go area for tourists because of army activity

in its native land but now there are plans to reintroduce it from New Zealand, where it is in cultivation, as it is here.

Many plant species are being preserved by a few thousand specialist gardeners, but to listen to the conservation bureaucrats it sometimes seems as if gardeners are responsible for most of the devastation taking place on the planet.

Of course, we should be alert to the source of the bulbs we buy, but not all of our purchases result in loss of species. There was an outcry a few years ago when rare bulbous plants began disappearing from parts of Turkey. To the local people the anemones and species tulips that grew wild near their villages were a vital source of income and they were digging up every bulb they could find, even small ones.

A strict conservationist line would have condemned the people to poverty and deprived gardeners of some beautiful plants. Instead, nurseries were set up so that seed could be saved and bulbs grown on to flowering size. Instead of species

being destroyed, they are actively propagated and the people have a regular source of income.

In recent years, many of the alpine plant collectors' favourite hunting grounds such as Iran, Iraq and, recently, Yugoslavia, have become no-go areas.

Like other collectors, the Archibalds have made trips to the mountains of Nevada and Oregon and the highlands of Chile and Ecuador.

Seed collecting, like plant collecting, sounds a gentle occupation but is often dangerous. In 1977, the Swedish botanist Linnaeus even wondered about the sanity of collectors: "I am tempted to ask whether men are in their right minds who so desperately risk life and everything else through their love of collecting plants."

The great collectors of earlier times were at risk of being kicked by mules, abandoned by their native guides or of catching some strange disease.

The tradition continues today and Mrs Archibald often patiently crawls on hands and knees through blizzards searching for seeds, sorting, cleaning and packing in all sorts of difficult locations.

Like most collectors, Mr Archibald started young. As a 19-year-old student of English at Edinburgh University, he had a sideline importing uncommon bulbs and selling them by mail order. Since 1986 the couple have been based in mid-Wales.

Archibald seed packets have no instructions or pictures. To find out what conditions the growing plants like, you have to read the catalogue, which offers nearly 50 crocuses, 40 narcissi, colchicums, pages of fritillaries, irises, lilies, muscari and hellebores. Growing these plants from seed is not for the instant gardener. It needs patience and experience, even nerve.

"Our seed lists are esoteric affairs and we wish to keep them that way. There is no point in our seed going to gardeners who are not experienced enough to give it

a fair chance." If this seems off-putting, it is perhaps necessary. The Archibalds and other collectors whose finds are on the list go to immense trouble and expense to supply the seed and do not want it to end up on the compost heap. Failure is disappointing for purchasers, too.

But the Archibalds do supply some seeds that, while needing experience, do not need Kew Gardens expertise. If you have grown hellebores, alstroemerias or cyclamens from seed before, the species and cultivars sold by the Archibalds or the other seed suppliers below should not be too daunting.

• Jim and Jenny Archibald, "Bryn Collier", Glyneddol, Llandudol, Dyfed SA4 4SSB; for a catalogue send four first-class stamps.

• Chadwell Seeds, 81 Pariaunt Rd, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8BB; seeds from the Himalayas, Japan and North America; catalogue, three second-class stamps.

• Richard Stockwell, 64 Weardale Road, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 1DE; rare climbers and dwarf species; catalogue, four second-class stamps.

GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
repplies to readers' letters

Q Can you tell me where I might be able to buy *Daphne retusa*? I have tried several leading firms without luck. — J. Lord, Newcastle, Co Down.

A This little evergreen shrub grows from a dense plantlet the size of a pebble until it is a boulder up to your knee in 10-15 years. The perfume is delicious in May and June and the flowers are followed by oblong red berries through late summer. *Daphne retusa* is stocked by Timpany Nurseries, 77 Magheranursey Road, Ballynahinch, Co Down BT24 8PA.

Q Two or three yellow roses in succession have failed to thrive in the rose garden at the crematorium where my parents are buried. Can you suggest a vigorous small yellow shrub or miniature standard rose to try? — Mrs C. Webb, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

A Where roses fail to thrive, the best plan is usually to plant something else, but perhaps you do not have that choice? I would contact the gardeners and see how they feel roses do in that garden and on that soil. Most yellow shrub roses, apart from the new 3-ft English roses like 'Jayne Austin' and 'The Pilgrim', are large shrubs of 6-10ft (Helen Knight, *x cantabrigiensis*, *hugonis*, *ezae*, etc), so I wonder too if this is being pruned properly? Is it a big shrub being butchered to keep it small? If the soil is genuinely rose-sick, then consult the garden staff about planting other things. If the soil is healthy but poor or sandy, try 'Dumwich Rose'.

Q My walnuts all get taken by squirrels these days. The tree overhangs a neighbour's garden and the squirrels get into the tree. What can I do? Any legal considerations? — Mrs E. White, Worthing, Sussex.

A You could try persuading your neighbour to move the nuts but I have seen squirrels cross open fields to get to a walnut tree. You could remove the lower branches so that the only way into the crown was up the trunk and then put a downward-sloping collar on the trunk to repel boarders.

• Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9BN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. Enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

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GARDEN ANSWERS

Get lucky with the heather

Can heather be adapted to small gardens? Stephen Anderton investigates a rural dilemma

The bold use of herbaceous plants has never been more fashionable, whether in the flowering steps of the new German style or the Rousseau-esque banana jungle of Christopher Lloyd's exotic garden. So where does all that leave the poor old heather-and-conifer garden? Is it just old hat?

The garden at Great Comp in Kent, one of the best attempts at heather gardening, was made in the 1960s and 1970s around a 17th-century manor house. The garden is in the Domestic Obsessive style: it grew and grew, from a modest, functional area around the house, spreading over fields into seven acres of winding grass paths and vistas, divided by deep shrubberies, each with the maximum complement of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

In the early days, heathers were used as a fast and colourful means of treating the open site and acid, sandy soil. Forty years on, mature trees offer shelter and shade, and it is now possible to grow a huge range of herbaceous plants, for sun and shade.

At Great Comp the hardy geranium reigns supreme. The motto Divide and Rule has here been interpreted as Divide, Replant and Rule, and there is an incessant motif of ground-cover throughout the garden. But on dry soil like this there is a need for ground cover to keep in the moisture.

There are also formal, deep, herbaceous borders, and lots of walled and hedged enclosures, which offer interesting lessons in planting for small gardens in town or country.

And there are "ruins" everywhere, built by Eric Cameron

who, with his late wife, made the garden and who now heads the charitable trust which manages it. The ruins, or follies, are made of stone found in the garden and old bricks, plastered together with lots of cement to make a pattern of stub walls, derelict doorways and windows, and viewing platforms (the garden is virtually flat).

Recent years have seen the introduction of a plethora of reconstituted stone urns, busts, plaques, a "plaza" of red-brick arched walls, Corinthian columns, a Victorian

fountain and a medieval frieze. It is an amalgam of architectural styles, artefacts and plants, bound together by determination, hard graft and Portland cement.

Heathers are used in a variety of ways elsewhere in the garden. The best example is the Sweep, a long informal vista which runs south from the back of the house to the boundary trees. A broad serpentine lawn winds its way between deep beds and promontories of heathers and

tall conifers. It works remarkably well. The vista may not be as open as it was, but there are compensations in the feeling of focus, and the way the trees cast their long, languorous shadows over the lawn at the end of the day.

Mr Cameron says: "The great photographer Harry Smith saw this garden in 1970. He said: 'Never alter it,' and it hasn't really been altered."

Elsewhere in the garden, heathers are used at a crossroads of broad, straight grass paths, to make an underplanting to a little New York of

close-fitting skyscraper conifers. The heathers look less at home here, having to meet the rigid line of a formal path.

I asked Mr Cameron, who runs the garden with a small staff, which planting he was happiest with — the open, informal sweep, or the formal fringe?

"Heathers are suitable for large areas," he says, "but they can be combined, too, with other plants and work well in smaller gardens."

The heather at Great Comp will be replanted as and when necessary. It is the most peace-

ful space of the garden, and the necessary foil for busier areas. Mr Cameron argues against the "heather-is-for-grouse" school of gardeners, who feel heathers have no place away from wild moorland. But he recognises they need every bit of space and light they can get to look comfortable.

The heathers in the Sweep at Great Comp have in some cases been there for 30 years, and are still going strong. Recent drought years have almost driven Mr Cameron to abandon his beloved rhododendrons, which are a main component of the garden, yet the heathers have come through happily enough.

There are old groups of *Erica x darleyensis* and *vagans* looking as dense and fresh as they did 25 years ago. Some groups, mostly of callunas, have been periodically replaced, because they tend to become bald at the centre more easily.

Some have needed to be changed for other species as the shade of growing conifers altered their environment. Others, in their attempt to spread over the lawn, have developed a less than attractive vertical face where the lawn mower rubs past them, and some of these have had to be replaced, where pruning would not cure the problem.

The temptation to let the heather spread and the lawn to become more narrow has been resisted; it is the continuing sense of open space these heathers need above all else.

Great Comp, Wrotham, Kent (01732 886154/882669) is open April 1-Oct 31, 11am-6pm.

The Heather Society may be contacted through the above address, or through the Internet: heathers@znet.co.uk



Eric Cameron (left) and his head gardener, William Dyson, check a patch of *Erica ciliaris* at Great Comp, Kent

PICK OF THE NEW VARIETIES

PROMISING new varieties of heathers being grown at Great Comp, Kent, include:

Erica x darleyensis 'Kramer's Rose' (red), Jan-May, 35cm tall x 60cm across.

Erica cinerea 'Crimson Glow', June-Oct, 30cm x 45cm.

Erica machayana 'Shining Light' (white), June-Sept, 25cm x 55cm.

Calluna vulgaris 'White Coral' double, Aug-Oct, 20cm x 40cm.

Calluna vulgaris 'Highland Spring' (a new growth of suffused red and white), Aug-Oct, 25cm x 35cm.

Erica x kramerii (E. carnea crossed with *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia*), a new, exceptionally long-blooming hybrid rose pink, April-Aug, 40cm x 80cm.

The above new varieties are all available (except, as yet, E. x kramerii) as rooted cuttings, by mail order only, from Denbeigh Heathers, Nursery, All Saints Road, Cressing St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8PJ (phone/fax 01449 711220).

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In the palace fit for McQueen

Philip Delves
Brought on the house that fashion's maverick is sad to leave

When Alexander McQueen was appointed chief designer at Givenchy last year, the fashion crowd flipped. How, they asked, could this 27-year-old, boiver-booted, East End lad succeed Monsieur Scissors himself, Hubert de Givenchy? While they agonised, McQueen himself was hot-footing it down to the estate agents of Islington.

"It was the first thing I did when Givenchy signed me," he says. "I'd always wanted a place of my own. The agents were thinking 'who the hell is this?' But then I offered to pay for the house right there. The whole deal was done in a week."

It is easy to understand why the estate agents were sceptical. McQueen does not look like a man with money to throw at a house. Chunky, crew-cut and slightly on the short side, he comes downstairs at his home, on a quiet terraced street in Islington, blinking into the sun like a mole.

He is suffering from the effects of flu and is wearing a blue bathrobe. Yet he is infectious, enthusiastic, polite and charming... In a thuggish sort of way. His appearance and manner are far removed from the flowing queues of the Lagerfelds and Gallianos. Hardly pausing for breath in the wake of rave reviews of his Paris shows and being voted co-designer of the year alongside John Galiano, he has just sent his menswear designs to the manufacturers. He follows that by producing two more collections, then jets off to Russia on a promotional tour for Givenchy and an advertising campaign with Richard Avedon.

McQueen has a grace-and-favour Givenchy flat in the Place des Vosges for his frequent jaunts to Paris. Islington, however, is home, and it is all spareness and calm.

He lives with his friend Murray Arthur, a demure Scot who keeps an eye on the accounts for the designer, and his dog, called Minter. Minter is limping after slipping by the pool at the Gloucestershire home of McQueen's close friend, the stylist Issey Blow.

Arthur and McQueen used to live in a warehouse in Hoxton Square, the now hip-grindingly fashionable area of East London where McQueen is originally from. Before that, McQueen lived in a flat on Highbury Fields, giving him a taste for this corner of north-east London.

"You should have seen this place when we moved in," says



Far left: the terraced house in Islington Alexander McQueen bought for cash. Centre left: shirts and jackets on metal clothes rails — and not an ironing board in sight. Bottom left: modelling a McQueen creation. Left: the designer in his element in bed with *EastEnders* on TV and with dog Minter

McQueen. A large blue tattoo of a kot carp across his left pectoral peeps from under his dressing gown as he waves his arm across the sitting room. "It was totally Margot and Jerry 1970s. Green carpets, green cupboards, cupboards everywhere. It was horrible."

In came the decorators, who ripped out the Margot and Jerry, painted the walls white, reconditioned the floorboards, stripped down the shutters and left a groovy shell for McQueen's lazily expensive kit.

"Alexander just goes out and buys himself things when he's been working hard," says Arthur, sitting on a tan Matthew Hilton sofa, beside a fire of smokeless fuel.

The designer clearly enjoys his speers. In one corner of the room, along from the Le Corbusier black leather couch, is a wall-mounted Bang and Olufsen CD player. "Look at this," says McQueen. He waves his hand in front of the glass doors of the machine, which magically slide open. On the floor are a pile of dance music CDs. Big dubbers then?

"No way," says Arthur. "We go to parties we feel we should go to, but otherwise we like coming home and watching *EastEnders* and *Brookside* with a cup of tea." They should keep this quiet, or word will



Far left: the terraced house in Islington Alexander McQueen bought for cash. Centre left: shirts and jackets on metal clothes rails — and not an ironing board in sight. Bottom left: modelling a McQueen creation. Left: the designer in his element in bed with *EastEnders* on TV and with dog Minter

get out that fashion's enfant is not so terrible.

The television is also Bang and Olufsen and swivels on a revolving steel base. McQueen, though, refuses to have satellite television. "People can waste their whole lives flipping between all those channels," he says.

There is a stack of videos beside the television, about half of them Carry On films. "They're Murray's," says McQueen. "I prefer stuff like *The Killing Fields*."

On the walls are photographs by Phil Pointer and Simon Costin, and a morose, grey bust by Colin Glenn. Over the fireplace is a large photograph of McQueen himself, looking demonically cherubic, in a dark Jacobean

the Jacuzzi," shouts McQueen, who is already disappearing into his bedroom.

Madonna once wrote that it was impossible to sleep well in Gianni Versace's bedroom because of the energy fizzing around the bed. McQueen's bedroom is disconcerting not so much for its creative tizz as for the alligator heads on show in surgical cabinets and the enormous, close-up photograph of a male bottom. When my little niece comes round, she says it looks like a flower," says McQueen beaming up at the work.

The fussier interiors buff might say the room is dominated by the television. The set and its stand are about five feet tall by three feet wide and the sort of thing the Rolling Stones might use on stage. The dark, wooden bed is

French, 1730s and decorated with cherubs. "I love mixing all this old stuff with the modernism," says McQueen. "The basement kitchen and dining room contain a tank of colourful marine fish and, of course, another television. At the back of the house is a conservatory leading on to a small, terraced garden ornamented only by two hurricane lamps hanging from a magnolia tree."

Despite feeling awful, the designer is now dressed in combat trousers, green shirt, two pairs of socks and maroon DMs and ready to head for work at his own label, McQueen, in Old Street. His words are broken up by snuffles and he keeps passing his hand under his running nose. "I want a bigger space, but I do like this place," he says.

Nostalgia, however, is not something he can afford right now. He must go to see his new lawyer, a Frenchman. "He works for Karl Lagerfeld and Christian Lacroix," McQueen is clearly still gobsmacked by the way his career has turned so fast. "This bloke's flown in specially to see me. Don't know how much he's going to cost me."

Yachts, Manhattan apartments, villas on the Mediterranean, all could be in McQueen's grasp before long. Somehow, however, it is hard to imagine him happier than when he's in bed with a cup of tea, watching Pauline Fowler's turbulent lifestyle unfold on the world's largest television set.

● The house is available through Winkworth, Islington (0171-354 2480) for around £350,000.

Michael Kittering, of the estate agents Winkworth, says: "We have seen a migration of buyers from west London because, although prices have risen strongly, they are still some way behind those in Notting Hill and Kensington."

Expect to pay at least £250,000 for even the most mundane house, however. In the Barnsbury and Canonbury conservation areas, a two-bedroom Georgian cottage will cost £300,000; four or five-bedroom period family homes with pretty gardens have guide prices of £450,000 upwards.

Mildmay is another popular growth enclave, and the area south towards King's Cross is also burgeoning patchily as its renaissance gets under way. "I sold a two-bedroom maisonette for £92,000 there, recently, and one just round the corner fetched £170,000," Mr Kittering says.

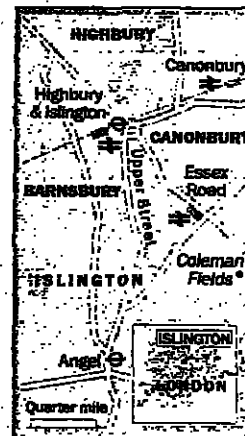
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MARKET COMMENT

THOSE who took an early stake in the gentrification of Islington must feel pleased with themselves. Property values have appreciated faster there than anywhere else in north London over the past few years. Frequent sightings of Tony Blair and his acolytes in trendy Upper Street restaurants helped to boost its cachet, and it has become favoured by media and creative types. They rub shoulders with financiers for whom proximity to the Square Mile makes the area an obvious choice.

City workers plug into the Northern line at the Angel at the top of Upper Street, a four-stop journey to Oxford Circus on the Victoria line. Soho is a £5 cab ride away.

Islington's most popular enclaves are the garden squares and leafy roads of Barnsbury and Canonbury, where Georgian and early Victorian houses and conversions have attracted an eclectic mix of families and singles, including a gay community.



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CHANGING TIMES

EAST END BOYS MADE GOOD

FORMER carpet-fitter Terry Crawley, from Bermondsey, is now one of Britain's highest paid City directors, and lives with his family in a house set in six acres in Knockholt, Kent. He owns four other properties there, including an 18th-century manor due for a £3 million refit.



BUSINESSMAN Joe Lewis, born in the East End to a pub landlord and now No 1 in the *Sunday Times* Rich List, lives with his wife in a £15 million property on New Providence in the Bahamas. Also owns homes in Florida, Buenos Aires and London, and a £40 million art collection.



MICHAEL CAINE, son of a Billingsgate fish porter, lives in a Grade II listed 17th-century country rectory in North Stoke, Oxfordshire. The property, bought for £400,000 in 1984, is now on the market at £2 million. It includes a swimming pool, tennis court and guest cottage.



HOME SWAP

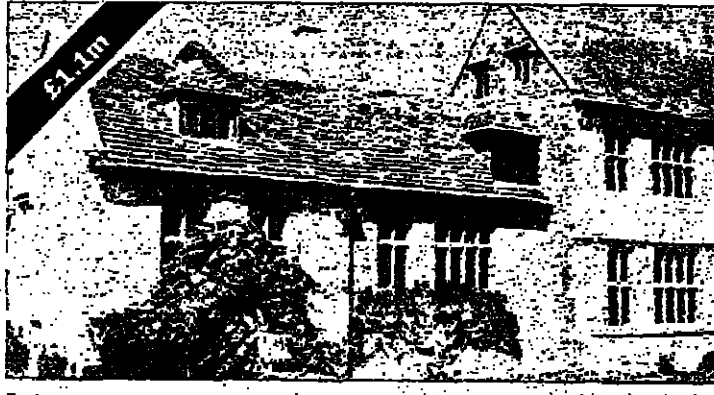
Demand for freehold houses in St Johns Wood, one of the capital's most prestigious suburbs, outstrips supply. White stone-fronted four to five-story Victorian houses, with up to six bedrooms, fetch from £750,000 to £2 million, following price gains of almost 20 per cent in the first half of the year. Houses on leases as short as 38 years, which are enfranchisable, fetch 20 to 30 per cent less than freehold ones. Two per cent stamp duty on houses over £500,000 is now starting to bite and prices are slipping, says estate agent Knight Frank.

Buyers priced out of rural Leicestershire are moving over the border to south Nottinghamshire. Period country houses, with up to six bedrooms and a couple of acres and priced from £300,000 to £400,000, are selling fast around Colston Bassett and Welbourn on the edge of the Vale of Belvoir, half an hour's drive from Nottingham and Leicester. Prices have increased by 5 per cent this year and further gains are predicted, with developers moving into the area, says Savills.

Any good period house in the range £250,000 to £500,000, which buys a four to five-bedroom Georgian village house with up to ten acres in Thomas Hardy country around Dorchester, will sell quickly, despite price rises of up to 20 per cent this year, reports Jackson-Stops & Staff. With high prices in Hampshire, many London escapees are moving to Dorset in search of better value. About a quarter are looking for second homes, with small country cottages available from £100,000.



In rural Nottinghamshire, £1.1 million will buy East Markham Hall, a refurbished Grade II listed eight-bedroom Georgian house in 6.12 acres of garden and paddocks, near Newark, overlooking unspoilt countryside. It comes with a summer house, tennis court, stables and a range of outbuildings (Savills, 01780 766222).



For the same amount, you could buy Charnham, a Grade I listed 17th-century manor house for restoration in 48 acres, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, at Cottesloe, West Dorset. It has a Grade II listed garden, a former stable block and a range of outbuildings (Jackson-Stops & Staff, 01305 262123).

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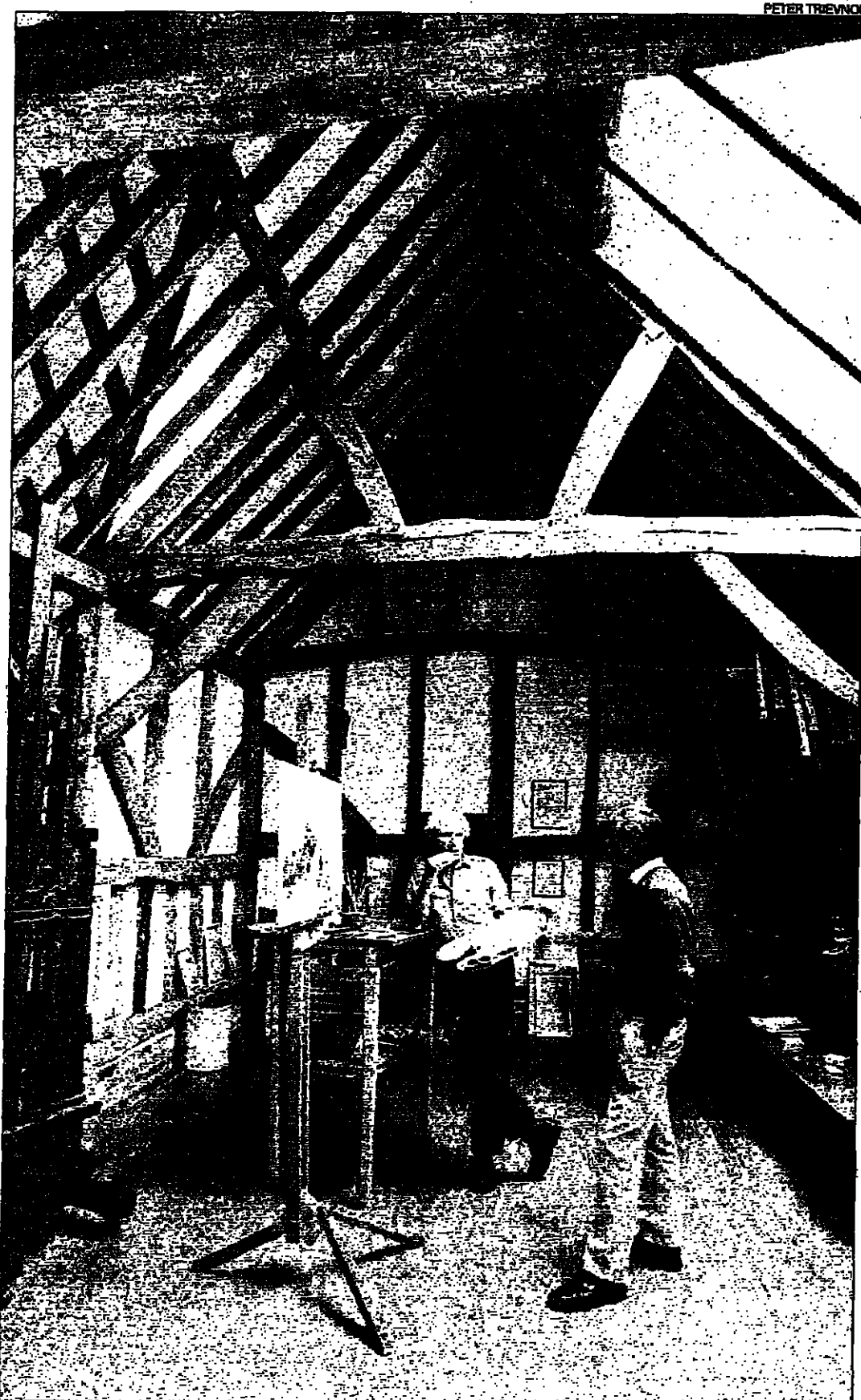
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A dearth of country houses has meant old farm buildings being moved across land and sea for restoration, says Cheryl Taylor



The artist David Shepherd in his studio: the barn was moved from Ockley to Hascombe, Surrey

Barn door opens again

The barn conversions had started to become fashionable in the Eighties when buyers, hungry for something different, snapped up redundant farm buildings "going for a song" and turned them into gems of tradition and rural comfort.

Farmers soon realised that there was money to be made from their old hay stores, cowsheds and pigsties and prices started to rise. Soon, it was not uncommon for a run-down barn to fetch £75,000 or more. But by the early Nineties, barn conversions had fallen out of vogue and prices dropped. Now, there is an upturn in demand for unconverted barns, especially those with exposed beams, mainly because of a shortage of quality houses for sale in country areas, and prices are rising fast.

The demand is so great that some buyers are beginning to buy buildings from abroad, taking them apart brick by brick and rebuilding a perfect French barn in England.

A small, single-storey timber-framed barn in its raw state in Britain will set you back at least £80,000 on a quarter-acre plot in areas such as Kent and Sussex, where demand is particularly high. A two-storey barn on half an acre will cost about £120,000; up to £150,000 for an acre, £200,000 with a paddock.

Some barns come with outline planning consent, anything listed architecturally will be a more difficult planning proposition.

"Many old barns need to be underpinned, and it is often simpler to knock them down and start again on new footings," says Gavin Selbie, of the estate agent Knight Frank at Tunbridge Wells, Kent, which reports strong demand for Kentish barns.

These complications, and the dwindling supply of redundant farm buildings suitable for conversion in the southeast of England, is encouraging some British buyers to look across the Channel for their dream home. Graham Moore, an architect, of Cranleigh, Surrey, buys old French barns, dismantles them and reassembles them at new sites in England.

Mr Moore's barns come from the calvados country around Lisieux, Normandy, an area bristling with traditional *colombage* (half-timbered) farm buildings that are ripe for renovation.

A large, two-storey, French oak-framed barn or granary about 68ft

by 24ft will cost around £28 a square foot delivered to its new site in this country. "We are salvaging barns that are under threat. Many of these ancient French barns are very beautiful and would probably be listed in Britain. The cost of conversion is a deterrent in rural France where country houses are thick on the ground and relatively cheap. We obtain permission from the town hall to dismantle them, and there are no legal fees, because no land changes hands," Mr Moore says.

He adds, however, that the French are becoming increasingly aware of their architectural heritage and are snapping up redundant buildings and moving them with- in France.

"There is a finite supply of such unrestored rusticity, but Norman barns are plentiful and cheap. Mr Moore is offering an oak-framed 18th-century *pressoir* (cider-pressing barn), which would convert into a two-storey, 2,300 sq ft, three-bedroom house, at £35,000.

He estimates that the cost of conversion would be about £10,000, plus architect fees of £4,000, and £110,000 to £120,000 for a half-acre building plot in southeast England.

The barn is supplied dismantled, with a photographic record of all stages. The timbers are labelled for re-erection in England, along with any salvaged antique clay roof tiles and the brick plinth wall on which the barn sits.

Mr Moore advises clients to view their barn in France before they buy, and to watch the dismantling. It takes his team of five French and English craftsmen about a week to dismantle a barn. The *torchis* (straw and clay) infill between the beams is beaten out and replaced with rendered concrete or wattle and daub in the traditional manner when the barn is rebuilt on its new site.

Alternatively, the barn can be covered in stained timber weatherboarding, with the oak beams exposed inside.

Mr Moore says he can help find a suitable building plot in England, apply for planning permission on your behalf, design and oversee the project, or work with your own architects. He can also recommend a local builder to do the work.

After the foundations have been dug, the frame is put together on its new footings and reconstructed brick plinth wall. Insulation, felt and weatherboard-

ing can then be added to the sides and the roof, along with the original roof tiles.

Erecting the barn takes ten days. Fitting it out, up to six months.

The main barn doors can be reconstructed on hinges and fastened back against the walls of the barn, so that the opening can have a double-height glazed window. Hayloft doors can be treated in the same way, giving the windows a natural appearance, so that the agricultural character of the barn is apparent when viewed from a distance. It can also be closed up

when the occupant is away, an important security consideration in a remote location.

Extensions built in seasoned oak, creating an L-shaped construction, can accommodate bathrooms and kitchens, retaining the open space and light in the main living areas.

Sturdy wooden stairways are included in many French barns, but interiors do not have to be traditional. Heavy oak timbers make a superb backdrop when juxtaposed with high-tech steel bridges suspended between galleries.

The cost of the completed barn will depend on land value and the standard of finish required. A superior four-bedroom barn will set you back about £170,000, plus land costs of around £120,000 for a half-acre plot. But, for £250,000 you get something very special.

'French barns are beautiful and can be relatively cheap'



French cider-pressing barn for sale at £35,000 from Graham Moore

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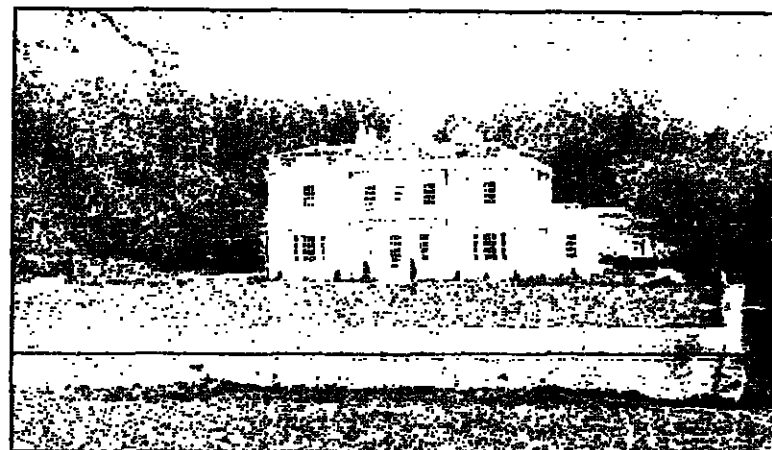
For those who prefer an English barn, Peter Barker, a specialist in antique, oak-framed agricultural buildings relocation, offers a plethora of dismantled buildings — many stored in the yard around his home, an oak-framed Elizabethan Grade II listed house in Dunsfold, Surrey, which he saved from a road widening scheme more than 20 years ago.

He rescues old agricultural buildings, mostly oak-framed, from all over England and Wales — anything from a 16th-century Sussex barn to an 18th-century cart shed from the Welsh borders, or a 19th-century granary.

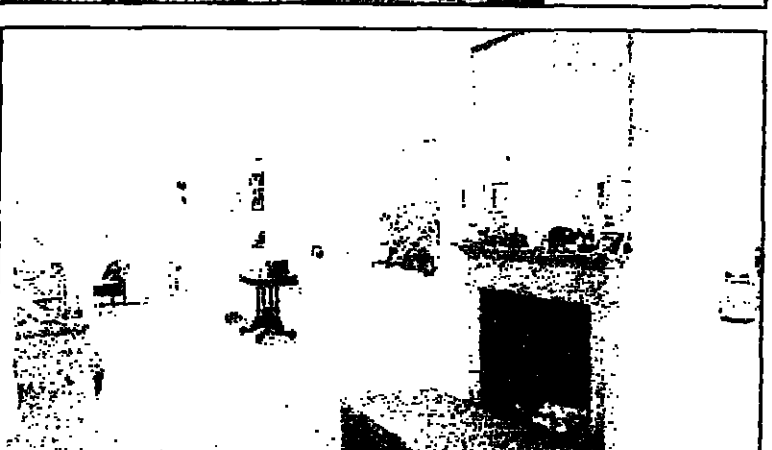
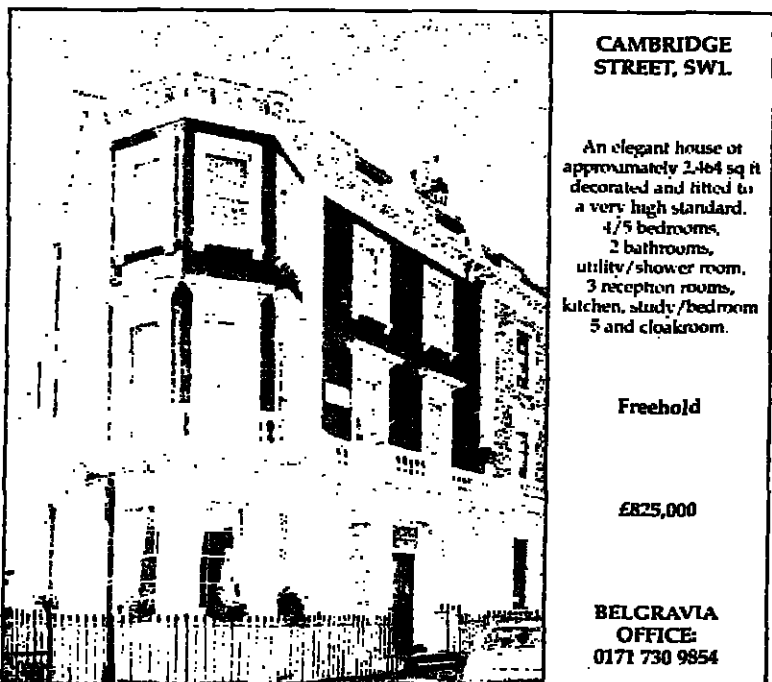
You can even mix and match, with a wing of an old cattle shed attached to a 17th-century two-storey Kentish barn, to form an L-shaped building. Mr Barker has rebuilt barns to cover everything from a swimming pool for Paolo Gucci, at Rusper, West Sussex, to a cricket pavilion, a garden centre and a winery. He moved a barn from Ockley to Hascombe in Surrey to create a north-facing studio for the artist David Shepherd. Paul McCartney also has one of his 300-year-old Sussex barns at his farm in Peasmarsh, East Sussex.

Although Mr Barker can build a small, oak-framed, two-bedroom, single-storey barn for under £150,000, most of his barns cost a lot more. Expect to pay up to £250,000 for a 2,500 sq ft, high-spec two-storey barn, plus the cost of the land.

● Graham Moore, *Typiquement (Normandy)*, 01903 264571. Peter Barker, *Antique Buildings*, 01483 200477.



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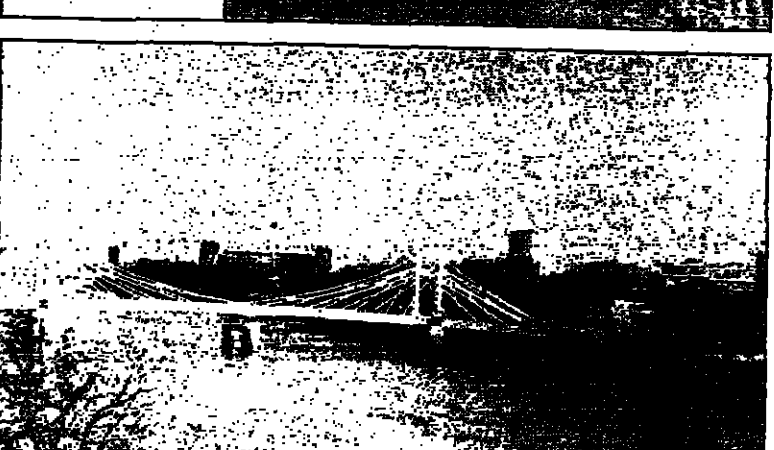
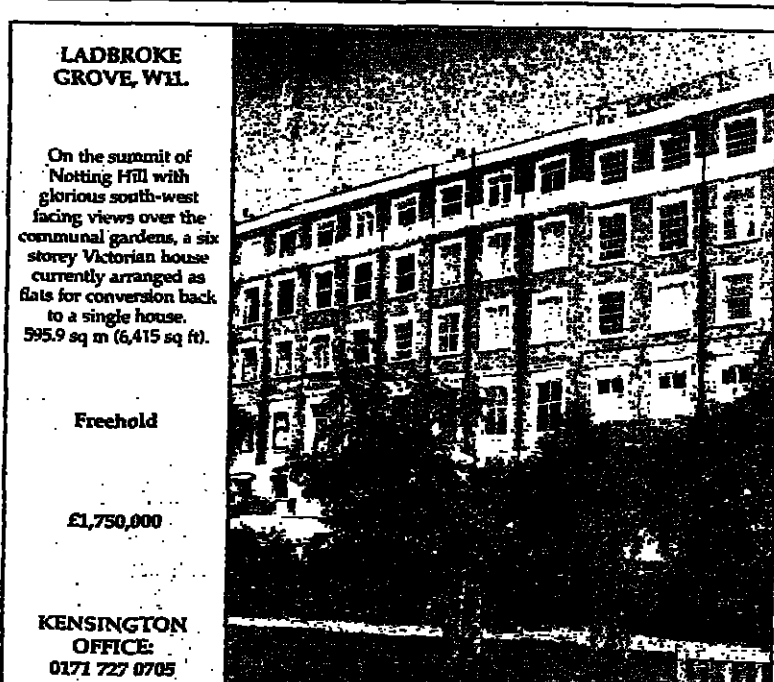
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Children meditating at Filton Avenue School, Bristol. They say it calms them down

Karma kids learn better

When you walk into Jacqui Dye's classroom at Filton Avenue School in Bristol, the air is heavy with the scent of lavender oil warming in an aromatherapy burner. "I swear by my lavender oil," chirps Mrs Dye, a jolly, enthusiastic woman with a nose-stud and a tie-dye waistcoat. "Every classroom should have one." On the wall a poster reads: "Learn to be silent. Let your quiet mind listen and absorb."

You fear the worst. You're here to witness the therapeutic effects of meditation for schoolchildren, and you're afraid you've wandered unwittingly on to the set of *Absolutely Fabulous*, a world where airy-fairy nonsense holds sway. In fact, Mrs Dye's classroom offers nothing of the sort. She admits that when she suggested meditation as a means of calming over-stressed children, she met resistance, if not hostility. "Some parents said, 'I can't see that working', and there were a couple of comments from staff about whether it was really necessary," she says.

"When I was starting one session, a voice at the back said, 'Oh, Miss, we aren't going to do any of that Chinese sitting down are we?' Even I wondered at first whether it was airy-fairy. But no one has complained. I merely use it for calming children and giving them a sense of worth and peace. If the technique is working, people will go with it, even if they're initially defensive."

Chris Burrows, who has introduced meditation to youngsters at the Manor School in Scarborough, also

Meditation for children? The sceptical James Rampton is persuaded that it works



Teacher Jacqui Dye says no parents have complained

encountered doubts at first. "Here even reflexologists are considered 'witches'," he laughs. "In the West, meditation is still seen as something strange and cultish because of all the rubbish in the media about it — even *EastEnders* makes jokes about going to see your guru. The media think that to teach meditation you've got to shave your head, go to the Himalayas and sit in a hut. They don't realise you can do it in the front room."

Mrs Dye still has some way to go before she converts all the sceptics, but she feels she is getting there. "The parents of the children I'm involved with might think this is a waste of time," she concedes. "They say, 'I just want them to read and write'. But the amount of work the children are producing because they're focused is amazing. After the quiet time, they feel 'yes, we can do it'."

On the evidence of a visit earlier this month, it does



School inspectors decided that meditation sessions were improving results. Teachers say it's the only time children sit perfectly still

seem to be working. Three pupils who have had various difficulties in the classroom arrive for their morning meditation. Mrs Dye gets them to sit in the Buddhist meditating position — hands cupped upwards resting on crossed legs — and close their eyes.

She then whispers words so soothing I find my eyelids drooping, too. "Just get a nice sense of being peaceful," she coos. "Think of breathing in good energy and breathing out bad thoughts and all the things that are bugging you." Three small brows visibly unfurrow as silence reigns.

Still sitting quietly on their cushions after the five-minute session, they politely answer my questions.

Violet, 11, weighs up the benefits of meditation. "When you've got bad thoughts, it takes them away and helps you get on with your work," she says. "I used to skip this quiet time, and giggle through my lessons. Now I'm better in the lessons." Kevin, ten, chips in: "When my Nan died, I was in a bad mood. Then I came

here and felt settled." In another group, Jeetender, eight, says meditation "helps me go faster at writing, because it gets my anger out". His classmate Kelly, nine, says to Mrs Dye that "when I was having an injection at the doctor's, I did the calm position you showed us and didn't feel a thing".

Mrs Dye's methods have also won over her head teacher, Stuart Ransom. Over coffee during the morning break he says: "At first, you think, 'Is this a fad? With anything new, there's a hesitancy because it hasn't been tested, but Jacqui's at the forefront of this and her enthusiasm is infectious. We had an Ofsted inspection recently, and the team said meditation was good practice."

There is other evidence to back that up. The New Beacon School near Manchester, where every pupil practises meditation for ten minutes a day, has recorded 100 per cent passes at GCSE and comes top in the North West.

Mr Burrows also claims to have achieved results. "The teachers have noticed that if an argument starts, the children pull back and approach it in a quieter way. And they sit through stories in a more focused manner, without fidgeting."

'It gives children a sense of worth and peace instantly'

He has also started meditating for five minutes every day with his nine-year-old daughter, who combines 'school-work with a budding career as a dancer. He says: "She gets a chance to be still, which she doesn't otherwise have. Watching TV isn't being still. If you video children watching TV, they're fidgeting all the time and their minds are still active."

Part of the problem Mr Burrows perceives is the increasing stress that our children experience. "My daughter comes home from school and she has to get her seven and

eight times tables off in a night. We were never given things to take home at that age. There are pressures on children earlier now."

Clive Erricker, head of theology at the Chichester Institute of Higher Education, who chairs meetings of the burgeoning Meditation in Education Network, agrees. "The message from teachers is 'get performing'. It increases the stress on children."

Mrs Dye says: "My children are expected to deal with a lot more than I was. They're taking on adult concerns, and they're not allowed to be children any more. What with parents out of work and poor housing, it's a miracle some children come to school and function at all. Meditation can take children out of themselves. It's a place you can go if there's chaos all around."

With the increase in testing and the ever-greater demands of the National Curriculum, meditation starts to look less like a hippyish fad and more like a smart move. Mr

Erricker, for one, sings the praises of meditation as a learning tool. "If a young child comes into a classroom angry from the playground, then they are not ready to learn. We move the mind from this state of confusion to a point where we can let go."

Gina Levite, who has researched the effects of meditation in schools, says its usefulness goes beyond the school gates. She says: "It's a self-help technique that you can do anywhere. You don't even have to close your eyes. You can meditate while you're walking and it's great when you're upset."

Mrs Dye sees no reason why all schoolchildren couldn't benefit from a bit of calm before the classroom storm. "Now this is picking up momentum, it could be used as a classroom technique by everyone. There are times when we all need quiet."

Violet seems to agree. Before going out to play with her friends in morning break, she admits that she'd like to come back to Mrs Dye for top-up sessions when she goes to secondary school next year.

Jason Cowley meets a couple who switched careers from media to marmalade

Cream tea with a French twist

Nick and Judy Gifford arrived in the remote northern French village of St Rémy-au-Bois five years ago with nothing but their three young children. As filmmakers, they had worked on pioneering programmes such as *Monitor*, *40 Minutes* and *Fine Cut*, but their relocation to the region of Pas-de-Calais coincided with a troubled period in their lives — work was hard to find, and they had lost money in the property slump of the early Nineties.

They paid £25,000 for a large, crumbling farmhouse, and set about rebuilding their lives. The transition was difficult: the farmhouse did not even have a roof, and their children, particularly their youngest son, Henry, then aged four, struggled to adjust to village life. The children missed their friends in England, and could not understand why their parents had downshifted so radically.

"Looking back," says Judy, "we never realised the stress the children were under. We filmed them after our arrival, and watching the films now is very revealing: poor Henry seems so lost and shy. If I'd realised how difficult it was going to be, we might have thought twice about the move."

Today, the family live simply but happily, growing much of their own food and making a decent living from what they proudly call their "scone and marmalade factory". Located in an outbuilding attached to their converted farmhouse, the "factory" is in fact little more than a large, scrubbed kitchen.

Still, there is nothing quite like it in France, through their company, Tea Together, the couple sell their own scones and marmalades to cafés and delicatessens, including several in Paris. In a neat twist, they have begun exporting to England: Harvey Nichols is a prospective customer.

"We stumbled on the idea of setting up the scone and marmalade factory after I began baking my own bread," Judy says. "Living in this strange, unfamiliar country, we became interested in questions of cultural difference, and in the most unlikely aspects of English life, such as baking."

"Although most people in the village are self-sufficient, with fridges and freezers full of their own food, they never bake. They buy all their bread from the local boulangerie. When I bought some flour to bake my own bread, everyone called me a hippy. But when I began making scones — something I'd never done before — they were amazed. They'd never seen or tasted anything like them before."

That is easy to believe. Judy's scones, served warm with clotted cream and a cup of tea, are light and delicious. They are made from unbleached flour imported from Kent and raw milk supplied by local farms. Her equally appealing marmalade is so popular that a local noblewoman, the Comtesse du Barry, recently placed an order for 18,000 pots.

To supplement their earnings from Tea Together, the Giffords have made a film, *French Lunch*, about the cuisine of the Pas-de-Calais, a region most British tourists tend to hurry through on their way south. Yet on this soil, from Flanders in the east to the Somme in the west, the monumental battles of European history have been fought.

The marmalade factory features in the film, as does a *ferme-auberge*, a restaurant where every dish is produced on the premises. "Our local woman called Odile Tesu, and she grows everything that is on the table, cooks it herself and serves it herself."



Nick and Judy Gifford in the "marmalade factory" at their farmhouse

Nick, stirring a vast vat of marmalade. "It is a remarkably labour-intensive business."

With his white surgical clothes and wire-rimmed spectacles, Nick looks more like a lab technician than a filmmaker-turned-baker. He enjoys his life of rural self-sufficiency, romantically calling it "Chekhovian".

Later, as we share a table at a cramped fish restaurant in the port of Le Crotoy on the bay of the Somme, he expresses nostalgia for his early years as a filmmaker. Years before, he says, "the BBC lost confidence in the kind of serious documentaries I want to make". And he desperately wants to continue making films: he was thrilled, for instance, to be asked to work on the *South Bank Show* profile of John Galiano filmed in Paris last year.

After dinner, I walked with Nick and Judy along the seafont at the Le

Crotoy. It was a cold, windy night and the Channel was seething, turning in on itself and showering us in spray. As Judy reflected on her years working on the arts programme *Monitor*, a current of sadness ran beneath her words. But she had no regrets: "You can only make the jump once: we have come so far now and our lives have changed so much, what with the marmalade factory and everything, that we can't go back."

"Sometimes it terrifies me to think what would have happened if things hadn't worked out in France..." Her sentence fragments in the wind. "Let's go home," Nick says. They walk slowly towards their car, metropolitan sophisticates apparently incongruous among the farmers and fishermen of the Pas-de-Calais.

© French Lunch is shown on the Carlton Food Network at 4.30pm today.

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'We'll have to see about all this I Want stuff. When I was a little girl, only Very Good children got what they wanted for Christmas'

A remarkable gift for shopping

The half term began with an imposing display of juvenile purchasing power. Ever since Alexander has been old enough to talk, his answer to the question, "What would you like to do for a special treat?" has been the same. He would like to go to the bus museum in Covent Garden. This time, however, he was more specific. There would be, as usual, a trip to the bus museum, but this would be preceded by lunch — Hawaiian pizza and ice-cream — and before that a visit to Hamley's to buy *Star Wars* toys.

It is, I must say, a cause of some anguish to me that, of all the fine personal qualities he might have inherited from me — the saintly patience, sweet nature, ladylike reticence and so on — the one that seems most forcibly to be presenting itself is a mania for shopping. Still, having promised him a treat, I feel I can hardly dictate what sort of treat, and accordingly, I find myself crouched on my hands and knees in the Character Toys department of Hamley's, examining card after card of microscopic mutant figures, each more heavily armed than the last. Eventually, we settle on something called Carbonised Han Solo — a

small block of graphite-coloured plastic from which protrude the agonised features and clawing hands of Luke Skywalker's intrepid chum after something very nasty has happened to him.

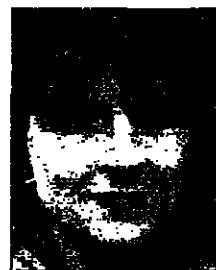
And this, I say wonderingly, is what you really want, is it? Yup, says Alexander, for the time being. Though in the longer term, he would like a Millennium Falcon. I don't really know what a Millennium Falcon is, except that it is very expensive, and clearly I am going to have to start saving hard, because, once more, "and then" time of year has come around. It is Halloween, and then it is Guy Fawkes Night, and then it is Alexander's birthday, and then it is Christmas. And all this means toys. Already the fireplace in his bedroom is stuffed with a fat sheaf of letters to Father Christmas, all firmly sealed, but thoughtfully copied to Linda and myself. "Dear Mummy and Linda" reads the most recent of these, posted under my bedroom door in the small hours, "this is

what I would like for my birthday and Christmas: X Wing, Tie Fighter, Death [sic] Vader, Heavy Blaster [sic], Love Alexander."

Yes, well, I say tentatively to Alexander as I lever myself off the floor at Hamley's. We'll have to see about all this I Want stuff. When I was a little girl, only Very Good children got what they wanted for Christmas. My son, who can tell when I am making it up, gives me a Look, and we head off towards the bus museum.

There, another recessive family gene suddenly emerges. Like his late grandfather, a sailor of strong and idiosyncratic opinions, my son simply

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

his stocky figure strode off towards the forbidden no-man's land beyond the notices. Now, in the bus museum, history repeated itself as my son, ignoring the plaintive cries of his mother, the glares of the museum attendants, and the profusion of notices, saying Do Not Board, clambered from tram to Routemaster to

steam train, murmuring, like Mr Toad, an entranced "Poop, poop!"

It was with some relief that I deposited him with his grandparents. Life in my parents' house proceeds at a stately pace, regulated by the news on the hour and the twice-daily strains of *The Archers*. They do have a telly, although I have never actually seen it working. But to Alexander's incredulous amazement, there is no video. When I telephoned to see how they were getting on, my mother said: that they were just carving a pumpkin into a Halloween lantern before going off on a nice walk to look for conkers. But, she added nervously, Alexander had decided that tomorrow they were going to make the bus into Canterbury and eat pizza.

Now, the sight of my mother confronting a Hawaiian pizza. Is one that I would give a good deal to see, if only I had not had a prior engagement to have lunch with Jimima, who had come up to London to buy clothes. Personally, I

would rather have anthrax than shop for clothes in the West End, but you can never explain this to people who live in the country. They are convinced that London is Where It Is At clotheswise.

"Do you think they will let us in?" said Jimima, looking doubtfully at our sensible shoes and stout handbags as we stood in a queue of pin-thin mummies and their designer-clad children at the Harvey Nichols restaurant, "or should be go round the corner to Peter Jones, where we belong?" But no waiter with a fiery tray barred our path. Gratefully, we ate up our pheasant and rice pudding, and wandered off to the clothes department, gasping and stretching our eyes at the amazing cost and utter hideousness of everything. Until turning the corner, we ran into it — a floor-length, jet-black, sheared rabbit evening coat of utter simplicity and perfect luxury.

"Go on," I said to Jimima, "tell me how much it is. I can't bear to look." "Well," said Jimima, examining the label, "think small conservatory. New kitchen, useful showjumper, coo. Imagine finding that on your bed on Christmas morning. Almost worth putting up with a husband for."

Supermodels go on show

Part masters
get their kits
out for the
Meccano
Exhibition in
London

As bookies and Irish priests teach children to count parrot-fashion by intoning "evens, 5-4, 11-8, 7-4, 2-1", Elsie Wright helped her son Geoff with his maths by introducing interesting answers such as 6100 or 4472: numbers of famous steam locomotives in the late 1930s. This approach put him on track for life.

Before long, this model mother introduced young Geoff to a scaled-down Lilliputian version of life, from mighty iron giants belching steam and smoke to train-set chuff-chuffs smelling of burning metals in the sitting room, and from there to the nuts and bolts of Meccano. Today, more than half a century later, Geoff Wright is Mr Meccano.

M.W. Models, his shop in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, is the only one in the world dedicated entirely to Meccano. He is surrounded by enormous constructions, made from thousands of parts, which are the envy of engineers everywhere: a block-setting crane with a 5ft boom, a fairground roundabout, a Lancaster bomber with a 6ft wingspan and working propellers, a reproduction of a 1937 BMW roadster which took 200 hours to build: a glorious 7ft model of the *Titanic* steamship with its four funnels.

At the press of a button, the *Titanic* bobs up and down but does not sink. Despite competition from today's high-tech toys and hobbies, Meccano has not sunk either. "Almost a century after manufacturing began in Liverpool, its appeal is as strong as ever," says Mr Wright. "Children as young as four start with a plastic kit and graduate to metal by the time they are six or seven. Later in life they remember their set in the attic, buy the parts



Meccano may be 90 years old, but it still appeals to all ages

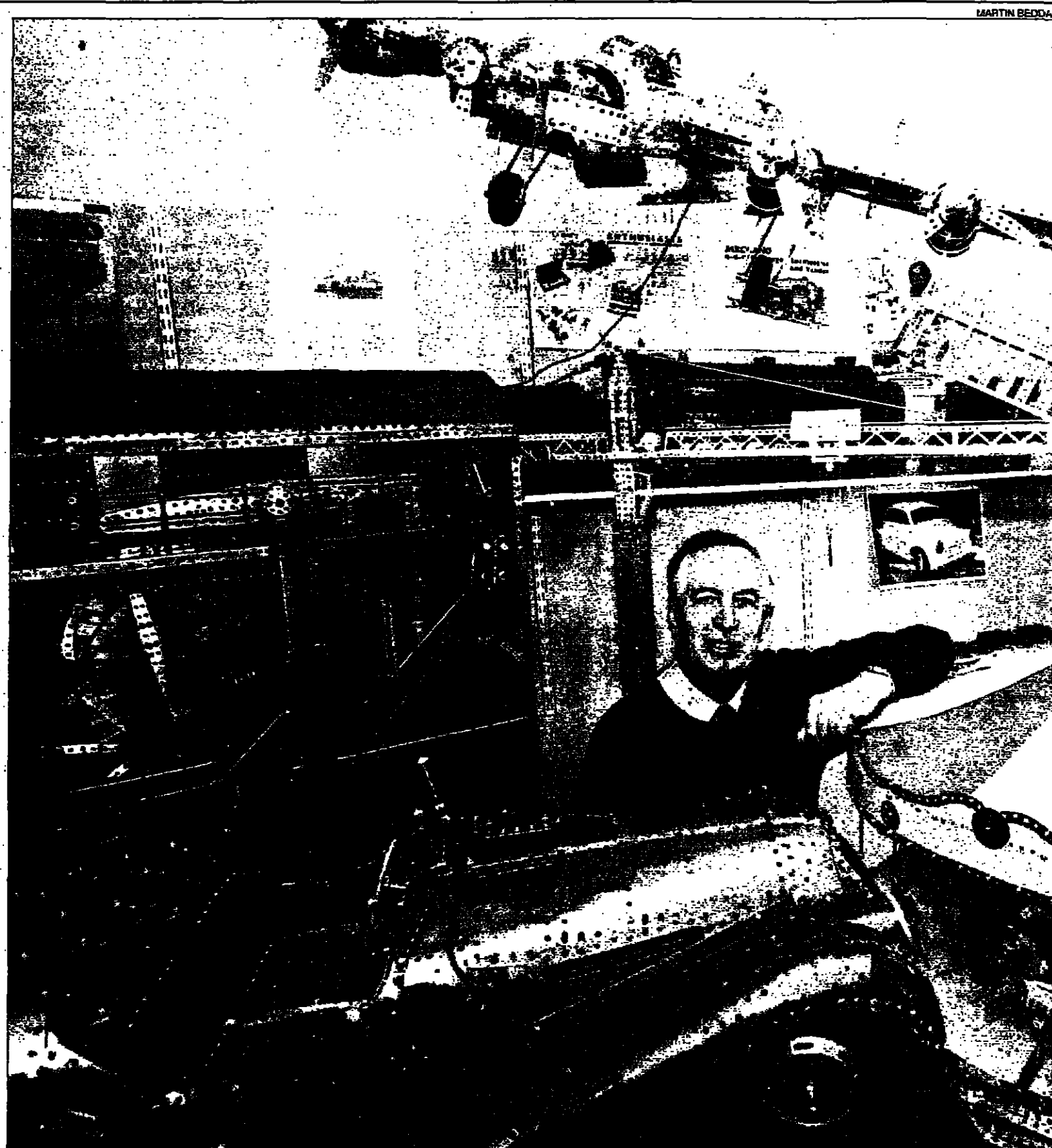
which they couldn't afford when they were young and then build the model that they always dreamed of."

This shop is Meccano Mecca, the centre of the universe for the thousands of international Meccanomen members who worship green metal strips with holes, brackets, plates, axle rods, gears, pulleys and the rest. Those struck by Meccano madness include Winston Churchill, Harold Wilson and the Sixties musician Joe Brown. George Cole is also a regular visitor to the Meccano shop. Hill, editor of *International Meccanomen*, says: "We have members and subscribers all over the world

and there is a growing interest among young people, from pre-teens up to engineering students who use Meccano as part of their curriculum."

The late Sir Alec Issigonis, inventor of the Mini, is said to have used Meccano to design the prototype for the gearbox of his famous car and, at his request, was presented with a No 10 set on his retirement.

The No 10 set Magic works to generations of enthusiasts the world over. The Panzer division of all Meccano sets, the 24-carat *ne plus ultra* of mechanical toys. Over 3,000 pieces including nuts and bolts, plus 150 illustrations of models. Production of this line



Geoff Wright, aka Mr Meccano, with some of the models at his shop in Henley, where collectors can track down hard-to-find parts and vintage curios

stopped in 1990, but Mr Wright can make one up for £1,500, with a £300 wooden cabinet an optional extra.

Meccano was born in Liverpool in 1901. Since then the company, now French-owned, has gradually expanded the range of parts, all numbered,

some with prefixes and suffixes, from No 1, a 25-hole perforation strip, to LY846A, a 2 x 3 x 2-hole double-angle strip. Mr Wright sells them all, from a 2p washer (part No 38) to a 10in flanged ring (No 1678) for £11.65. He even has a miniature 2,500,000-to-one gearbox. Turn the input shaft 2,500,000 times and the output shaft turns once. A motor is recommended for this novelty.

He also sells reproductions of deleted items, parts Meccano never made and parts in different colours. "Colours are important," he says. "They indicate the period when parts were made. Red and green were introduced in 1926, blue and gold arrived in 1934, today it's zinc strips with blue and yellow plating. You can tell that the tower in the shop window, with the working lifts, is from the early 20th century, the so-called nickel period, because it's all made of bright and shiny nickel."

Three of the exhibits — Lancaster bomber, *Titanic* and windmill — were made by Jim Gamble, technical manager at Nottingham University's chemistry department. His Meccano Historical Collection, which features regularly in museums and exhibitions, is the result of 30 years' devotion to his hobby. He made ten of his 40-strong fleet; the rest are factory promotional models. They range from small mechanisms, such as a clock, through gantry cranes, windmills and a fully fitted (gearbox, differential and brakes) car chassis to a 9ft replica of the battleship *King George V*. He has no idea how long it took him to make, far less the number of parts

involved, "or how many holes it has. That's the other daft question I'm always asked."

Mr Gamble has just about every piece of Meccano ever made. He does yearn, though, for a wooden chest containing the top-of-the-range L set, with its thousands of blue and gold parts, from the mid-Thirties. "The collecting aspect of Meccano is a bit like collecting stamps," he says. "It's fairly easy, cheap and quick to build up an enjoyable collection, but it's the rarities which stand out — like a Geared Roller Bearing which cost £1 prewar but which might now fetch more than £300 in good condition. Or a rare Meccano crystal radio set from the early 1920s."

"The fun, though, is building. It's very tactile and it's timeless. A child today can make a rocket ship using exactly the same parts as his great-grandfather used to make a First World War tank."

Mr Gamble, a consultant to Meccano, can remember the first construction he ever made, from a 1951 No 5 outfit "which my father bought for me — and himself. It was a British Road services-style lorry, the last model in the book."

He has also provided much of the archive material for the Meccano Exhibition which opens at the London Toy & Model Museum today. Among the hundred or so exhibits are an 8ft Tower Bridge, the Statue of Liberty and a robot that might or might not turn heads because all it does is turn its head. The centrepiece of the show is a 23ft Christmas tree. The exhibition is open to all Meccano nuts (part No 37A).

ALASDAIR RILEY

NUTS AND BOLTS



- The Meccano Exhibition at the London Toy & Model Museum, 21-23 Craven Hill, W2 (0171-706 8000) is on until February 21.
- Geoff Wright, M.W. Models, 4 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 1RY.
- Jim Gamble, the Meccano Historical Collection, 101 Ella Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5GZ.
- David Austin, aeroplane restorer and dealer, 01235 847090.

TROUBLE IN TOYLAND

A toy dog isn't just for Christmas and isn't necessarily forever, *Alasdair Riley writes*. Pooch can get the stuffing knocked out of it, or its insides can rot, in which case it might find itself in the toy hospital, alongside a green-faced Barbie doll and a teddy whose yellow foam guts have metamorphosed into red dust. Or sticky gunk.

It may sound like a reject script from an X-Files writer, but the truth is that toytown, or more specifically its older inhabitants, are suffering from a series of killer diseases. Like cyberpets, they can die.

"Wing droop can be a problem," says David Austin, who deals in and restores Dinky Toys, especially aircraft, from his home, appropriately called the Aerodrome, in Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire.

A whole generation of pre and postwar planes has collapsed as a result of recycled waste material being used in their manufacture. Radiators have burst through bonnets, wheels warped, tailwings snapped off. Which can be pretty unconvincing if you own one of the top-of-the-range brightly coloured Beaverbrook Spitfires, sold to raise funds to build real Spitfires as part of the war effort, and worth as much as £500 on today's toy market.

The doctors' advice is avoid moisture and temperature fluctuations, but surgery can be a solution. As ambulance-loads of sick toys are ranced to the restorers, so a large cottage industry has grown up to make replacement parts lids for prewar postboxes, top wings of

bi-planes, steering wheels for open-top Austin 7s, and a host of other tired toy body bits. And it's not just metal. Kim Nissan was shocked to wake up one morning to find several of her huge collection of Barbies were sick: they had literally turned green overnight.

This alarming trait is becoming a common problem, according to Anita Quayle, an analytical research chemist at the National Museums of Scotland. "I work closely with the chemistry department at Strathclyde University, where one student has a 1950s doll that has one leg and arm which are withered and discoloured, while the others are in good condition."

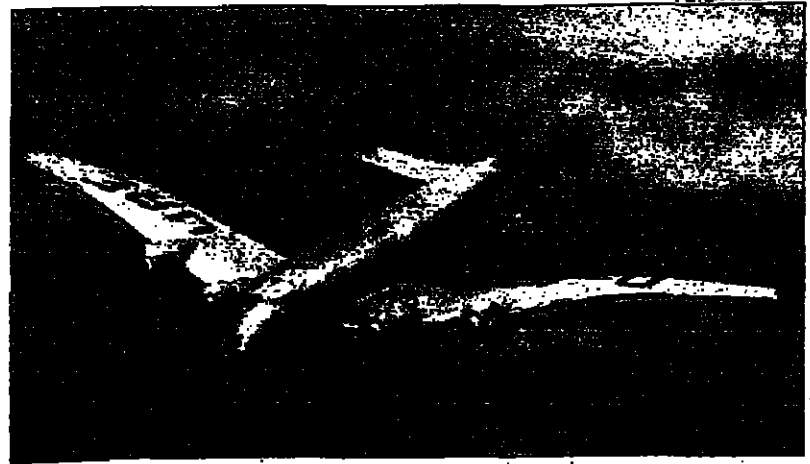
"Why? The manufacturer obviously

expected the doll to remain in good condition for the life expectancy of the toy, but it's difficult to anticipate how new dolls such as Barbies will react with time."

"Our advice for collectors is to keep plastic dolls out of bright sunshine, away from damp places like garages, and not to wrap them tightly in newspaper."

Ms Quayle is working on an antidote to green Barbie syndrome but as yet there is no cure. The Spice Girl dolls will be on show in time for Christmas. At £15 each, a full set of Posh, Ginger, Scary, Sporty and Baby will set you back a tidy £75. So, if you are intending to buy one for someone special this year, be sure to take out life insurance.

PETER TRIVINOR



For model aircraft aficionados, avoiding metal fatigue is a serious business

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The next victim? Huntsmen are unmoved

Young cubs just want to have fun

Oh, bloody hell," cried seven-year-old Harry as his tiny Thelwell pony hesitated at the fence, then car-jumped over sharply, depositing him on the soft ground. The only injury was to his pride, and within seconds Harry, a farmer's son, was back in the saddle, checking to see whether any of his mates had noticed.

He was lucky. With 80 children, aged from four upwards, milling about on ponies of all shapes and sizes at the Warwickshire Hunt's children's meet, trying to avoid an encounter with the hindquarters of Claire's confirmed kicker, or preventing little Gumdrops from bolting off into the woods, his mishap went largely unremarked.

Eight-year-old Jack was less fortunate when he came unstuck from Flicka, an immaculate little grey, cantering on a lead rein in the wake of a hunter — the mount of his father, Johnny Arkwright. With his nanny and girl groom in close attendance, Jack was dusted down and scrambled back on, evidently resenting this shaming public display of feminine solicitude.

"Good lad. It's a great character-builder, hunting," said one seasoned foot follower. "And it's booming, specially among youngsters. I've seen more kids out this season than ever before and that's because everyone in the country feels their way of life is under threat."

"It's the same story with the other hunts. They're coming out in their hundreds and bringing the youngsters because they feel they have to make a stand. They have to show people like Michael Foster, the Worcester MP who has introduced a bill to ban hunting with hounds, that country people are genuinely angry at being mucked about by

Sally Jones, an unabashed fan of hunting, extols the virtues of children's meets

CLIVE POSTLETHWAITE/JOHN POTTER



Was this a good idea? A young rider tries to pluck up the courage to remount after taking a tumble at the Warwickshire Hunt children's meet. A turnout of 80 is common

'Taxpayers will have to foot the bill'

John Roberts meets a huntsman hounded out of his job

HUNTSMAN John Stride stands morosely among his echoing empty kennels. The horses have all gone. His staff have dispersed. Only seven baffled hounds remain.

Soon even they will be put down, the last remnants of the New Forest Buckhounds which packed up in August through urban encroachment, ending 1,000 years of fallow deer hunting on the New Forest.

If Labour MP Michael Foster's attempt in the Commons to ban the chase is successful, it will be repeated all over the country. Foster and his supporters, rattling around urban Britain in a bus collecting anti-hunt petition signatures from town dwellers, have yet to visit Brockenhurst in the New Forest to see the potential effect of a ban.

Stride, 48, looks balefully around the few hounds in his empty kennels. "It's terrible really. I'm being kept on here till next May and then the dogs will be put down. The



The New Forest Buckhounds will be put down next May if hunting is banned

hounds know what's up. They're strangely silent now, even when I'm out walking them." John Stride has worked in hunt service all his life since leaving school. His hunt staff have traditionally collected "fallen stock" — dead farm animals, the offal from deer not wanted by the meat

trade and dead forest ponies — to feed their hounds. The Buckhounds have coped with removing 600-700 dead animals a year. At this time of year wild New Forest ponies have been keeling over at the rate of one a day, poisoned by eating acorns.

Stride says "I've had three farmers on

the telephone already this morning. Something's got to be done about all these dead animals. Without hunts, farmers will just dump them. There'll have to be a giant incinerator in the Forest. And more across the country. The taxpayer will have to foot the bill for what the hunts have always done — and that'll be a lot of money."

Hunt chairman Peter Barfoot, 47, is depressed. "There's a lot of ramifications. We're still picking up dead animals because we're decent chaps. I suppose, but there's the deserted kennels and nothing for people in the winter any more."

Others are trying to work out how to fill the deadstock void. Arthur Barlow, the Forestry Commission's deputy surveyor in the area says: "We're having urgent talks with farmers and Forest wardens. We can't have animals dumped. The hunts perform a valuable service. Without them it would be a cost on the taxpayer."

The New Forest East Tory MP Julian Lewis is worried too, and has written to Agriculture Minister Jack Cunningham warning urgently of the consequences if hunting were banned. "This is a problem on a massive scale. It's what happens when people blunder into long established systems on ideological grounds."

the children having a go and we hired a pony for Charlie from the stables — £20 a day. He loves it."

After working in a huge loop across the pretty landscape of small fields and woodlands, the hounds started baying with the excitement of the job in hand, near the village of Ashorne. After a short chase up and down the hedgerows, they killed in a nearby copse, out of sight of the young riders.

"No one gets blooded these days," says Mary Sewell, one of the multitude of mothers following on foot, "although these are mostly country children who aren't worried by seeing a kill because they know it's all part of the job."

Even the social mix was more varied than I remembered from the few times I hunted 20 years ago. Although newcomers still expect everyone to sound like Lord Snooty, Hoaroy Henry, particularly in the Warwickshire Hunt, are thin on the ground. The children's meet included the off-spring of window-cleaners, smallholders and publicans.

Tatty trailers and battered Fords with We Eat British Beef With Confidence stickers far outnumbered the handful of Range Rovers lined up in the paddock. Towards the end of the morning, Lucy Horms, with her father still in tow after a gruelling hike of around seven miles, watched fascinated at her first sight of a fox that day.

"It came down a hedge straight towards us with the hounds close behind," she said, still breathless at the memory. "We turned it and the hounds caught it about 20 yards from us. In a few seconds there was nothing left. I wasn't upset — it's one less fox to take our geese and chickens."

Don't panic, it's a siskin

FEATHER REPORT

ONE SUNNY morning last week I was passing a wood with some graceful, dark fir trees in it. They were hemlocks, a North American species that is often grown over here, and in the sunshine their small, dangling cones looked almost orange.

Suddenly I became aware of light, flitting movements among the branches, and when I turned my field glasses on to the trees I found several siskins hanging under the cones, picking out the seeds. Tinkling, twanging calls were also coming from the trees behind them, and I realised I had stumbled across a flock of these little green finches.

By now, most spruce firs have scattered their seeds, and siskins, which rease the seeds out of the spruce cones for much of the summer, have usually turned their attention to the black cones in the alder trees. However, this enterprising little flock had discovered that not all of the hemlock cones were empty yet, and were making the most of their find.

Suddenly there was a buzzing, twanging outburst of noise, and about 30 siskins swept into the air from all the hemlock tree-tops around, circled in a tight flock, then scattered and fell like little green droplets of water into the branches again. It had been one of the "panic attacks" that regularly afflict siskin flocks, with no visible cause. They last only a few seconds before the



Siskins are small, restless birds

birds hurry back to their food. I watched the siskins for a while. I had good views of them in the low sunshine, and could pick out the yellow-green males with their black caps, and the duller green females with their streaky sides. But they were restless, darting from one tree to another, and before long they had all moved off.

It is known that a siskin flock will sometimes travel 30 miles in a day. They need to make the most of the daylight, and it is not worth lingering in any clump of trees once they have

picked off the easy seeds. Better to find food that can be gathered quickly somewhere else, then come back tomorrow when more seeds will have ripened.

For most of the winter they can be found in birch or alder trees. They will also pick up alder seed where it has fallen on a lake shore or been washed up on a river bank. Resourceful creatures, they have even been seen floating on water lily leaves where alder seeds have dropped. In recent years, they have often been lured into gardens in the bleak days of January and February by peanuts.

Large numbers come to Britain in the winter from further north, but in the summer in Britain they are predominantly birds of the Scottish and northern English spruce forests. However, reports of them nesting in southern England have been growing more frequent, and they seem to be a thriving species.

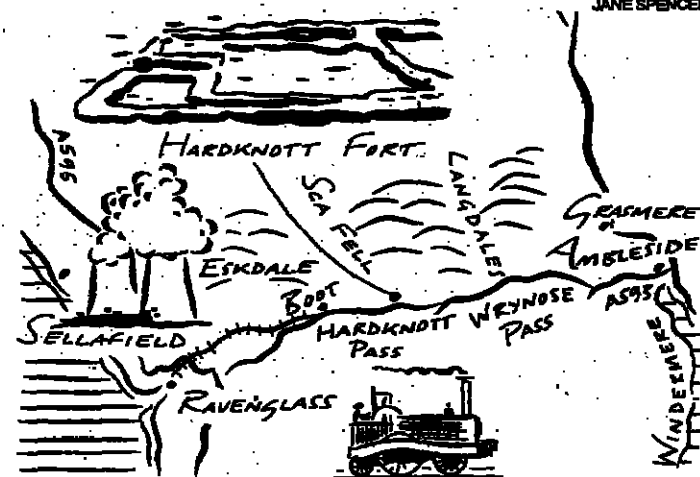
In the spring they make their nests of fir twigs and heather at the outer end of spruce branches, where they are hard to get at. But one, more trusting, pair in Scotland built a nest in a flowerpot hanging from the roof of a house. I think they are steadily going to become more confiding and more familiar birds in Britain.

DERWENT MAY

• What's about: Birds — look out for noisy flocks of fieldfares arriving for the winter from Scandinavia. Twickers — hoopoe at Wallasey, Wirral; common yellowthroat, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly; short-toed lark, Saltkiss, Norfolk. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222. Calls cost 50p a minute.

ON THE SPOT: HARDKNOTT PASS

JANE SPENCER



The place: Hardknott Fort, Hardknott Pass, Cumbria. The view: the fort lies on a plateau on the fellside and from this vantage point is an excellent view of the crags and green slopes of the Eskdale valley. To the north are the rugged Scafell mountains.

Appeal: desolate, exposed spot reached by an exhilarating drive. Activities: Lakeland locals, hikers and brave drivers.

Historic Interest: the best-preserved fort in the Lake District dates from the 2nd century and contains the remains of a parade ground, barracks and bath houses. The Romans built it as a link between Ambleside and the port of Ravenglass. The approach from Wrynose Pass is one of the most exciting in Europe with hairpin bends and gradients of 1:3.

Time to visit: spectacular at dusk or dawn. How to get there: from A593 take road via Wrynose Pass to Hardknott Pass. Park on the right after steep descent from the summit and walk 100 yards.

OS map ref: 219/015 on sheet 90. Also nearby: Miniature railway from Boot to Ravenglass, Wordsworth museum at Grasmere and the nuclear power plant at Sellafield. The beautiful Langdales are 7 miles east.

DEBORAH KING

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This month — after a storm of letters about the great wasp horror — readers target insects, soil pollution and the millennium project

Turn the dome upside down and...

I never cease to be amazed at the way certain words in this weekly column can trigger totally unexpected reactions on such a vast scale. The Chaos Theory suggests that the air disturbance caused by the beating of a butterfly's wings as she flutters through the South Pacific may eventually lead to the depression which brings sharp showers to Burnley; and if scientists need further proof of the chaos small things can cause, they should examine my postbag. It seems that the lightest tremor turns into a shockwave of reaction.

In the past six months, to judge from your letters, there has been little of interest in the countryside which does not relate to either wasps or sewage disposal. There you go! I can already hear the scratching of nibs on paper.

Weeks back, I hinted that I had little time for wasps. This brought forth some hurricane-force letters that are still buzzing around. Many express the view that the sanctity of all God's creatures is inviolate. I cannot print any more of them, already having enough to wallpaper an outside lavatory (another subject which I dare hardly mention again). But I will offer you the thoughts of retired

surgeon John Dickson of Westerfield, near Ipswich, who writes:

How horrid of us to seek to annihilate, e.g. the polio virus, or to exterminate smallpox, the dear little flies, the malaria mosquitoes, the fleas, that transmit plague, or the loveable larvae which travel through the blood stream till it blocks the retinal artery, causing African river blindness. Two cheers for leprosy! The trouble with the soggy and soggy "God's Creature's School" is that they are totally ignorant of biology, pathology, and the multiple horrors of the insect world and of the depths of the oceans. Christ Himself set an unfortunate example by causing the Gadarene swine to jump off the cliff. Though how one gets rid of a spirit by throwing it over a precipice, I have never understood.

To save you ink and paper, and in the interests of animal welfare as well as to comply with the Ministry of Agriculture's code of practice, I must dissociate

myself and this newspaper from the idea of causing swine to jump off cliffs, no matter how possessed by evil spirits they may be. (As a frustrated pig-owner, I have often been tempted by their actions to jump off the cliff myself.) In comparison with wasps and sewage, far fewer letters followed the thoughts I offered on the sanctity of the soil as the bedrock of all life on this planet. Perhaps this tells us something. However, I do have the support of Neil Winship, who runs a composting and organic waste business. He writes:

How right to encourage our thanks for the wondrous top soil, with its blend of

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

should be accorded the same priority in environmental protection as water and air. Converting us to say "lovely as loam" similarly to "fresh as air" or "clean as water" may be quixotic, but from those of us who are trying to compost society's food and garden wastes so they can renourish our soil, thanks for trying.

nutrients, moisture, minerals and life-sustaining microbes, for surely our fundamental wealth comes out of the ground — by God willing — by growing or mining. Readers may not be aware that the Royal Commission on environmental pollution recommended that soils must be conserved as an essential part of life-support systems and that the same priority in environmental protection as water and air. Converting us to say "lovely as loam" similarly to "fresh as air" or "clean as water" may be quixotic, but from those of us who are trying to compost society's food and garden wastes so they can renourish our soil, thanks for trying.

The Royal Commission's recommendations are interesting. Regular television slots are given to reports on air quality, and the purity of drinking water is hardly ever out of the headlines. If, in addition, regular reports were presented on that day's additions of chemicals to the soil — organic and inorganic — might this precious commodity not become as highly regarded as the air and water?

Better still, as an indicator of soil health, might now we institute a national worm count? The organic health of a soil is said to be directly associated with the numbers of earthworms present. This is why, if you dig a spadeful of organically farmed soil, you hope to see a writhing mass on the end of your spade. But dig a lump of intensively farmed land and you will realise that the worms have left town because they know what's good for them. Worm counts, surely, cannot be all that difficult to organise and verify scientifically? If we

can count pollen, we can count worms. Finally, a word of sympathy for the doctor from Kent, featured here last month, who failed to find a wife through the lonely hearts column of the apparently streetwise, but clearly narrow-minded, *Time Out* magazine. The doctor insisted the young lady he was seeking should share his appreciation of cesspits. *Time Out* thought there was something mucky about his suggestion, and refused to print the word.

However, Derek Martin, of Marlborough, Buckinghamshire, reminds us that:

As we approach the 21st century, there are about one million houses in England without mains drainage. They are not all remote. In the district where I live, there are some 500 houses not on the mains — and we are less than 20 miles from Trafalgar Square. It would be more sensible to commemorate the Millennium with a massive extension of the mains drainage system, instead of spending money on a dumb dome at Greenwich.

Sorry, Mr Martin, but I think you're wrong. Turn that dome upside down, and just think of what a truly great septic tank it would make.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.



After a grand entry, the Lipizzaners of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna perform their "dancing" routine, a choreography of "airs above the ground" or classical jumps that have their origins in the battlefield



Creatures that can dance in the air

Lipizzaner horses may be bred to leap and fly, but it still takes ten years to train one, Lin Jenkins reports

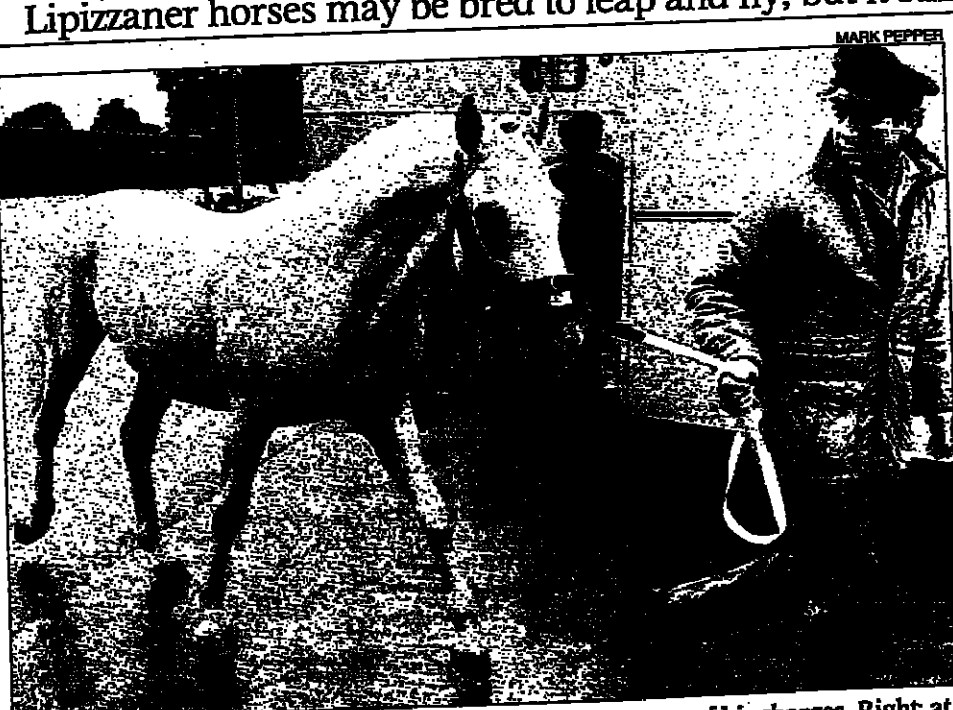
Meeting a Lipizzaner stallion off-duty is disappointing. Short and stocky, he bears none of the hallmarks of that tradition of British equestrian excellence, the thoroughbred. But looks are not everything. In a Viennese whirl originally choreographed for the battlefield in centuries past, the white horses of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna dance like a dream.

In the absence of wars, they maintain their heritage not just as some kind of archaic spectacle, but as a celebration of classical riding. Which goes some way towards explaining why their British tour is all but sold out.

At the Nynex Arena in Manchester next week, they will perform before the biggest-ever crowd for an equestrian event in this country.

With Vienna and dancing white stallions as attractions, the riding school inevitably pulls in a healthy contingent of toe-tapping *Blue Danube* enthusiasts, the "sugar-cake" crowd that also turns out for concerts by the Vienna Boys Choir. But these waltzers are in the minority, say the organisers. At least one-third of the audience in any show — and they always sell out — buy their tickets "because they know what the horses are doing". Pony-mad children and dressage aficionados turn out in their droves.

The horses are extraordinary. No other breed produces foals which are black or brown, then turn grey and then white by the time they reach their teens. Nor has any one breed been so selectively bred and trained for one task alone: to dance. The original stock bred at Lipizza, or Lipica, in Slovenia, near Trieste, established in 1580, was largely of a even more ancient breed that still exists, the Andalusian. Their offspring are now part of the only academy where pure classical horsemanship is practised as an art, using the



Above: Johannes Hammiger, the stable manager, with one of his charges. Right: at night, grooms sleep beside the Lipizzaners to reassure them and guard them



methods taught by the Greek military leader Xenophon 400 years before Christ.

When the stallions enter the arena to perform a quadrille, or an individual horse the capriole, or the similar gymnastic movement, there is not a sound. Each horse is finely trained to respond to the invisible touch of its rider — the increased weight of one seat bone, an extra squeeze with a calf muscle, or the light touch of a hand on a rein.

The Spanish Riding School is no circus act, yet its reputation has been sullied in recent years by an American outfit advertising itself as "The Dancing White Stallions". The school's Viennese riders, too, are mounted on Lipizzaners, and wear the distinctive tricorn hats, albeit fore and aft rather than the correct left to right. But in terms

of classical ideal, they are roughly equivalent to the village panto.

Tony Fressler, the general secretary to the Anglo-Austrian Society, which organised the British tour, is dismissive of them: "When you go to Las Vegas and tire of the gambling, you can go and see their glitzy act."

The antipathy runs deep. The Spanish Riding School has not visited America since the Seventies, because of the impostors. "Many people in Britain say they have seen the Lipizzaners and they were so good," Mr Fressler says. "But they were not the true Lipizzaners of the Spanish Riding School."

In Britain, the Advertising Standards Authority forced the Americans to amend their tour advertisements with small print disclaimer saying: "Not the Spanish Riding School." But the Ameri-

can outfit can at least justify its claim to Lipizzaner horses — because it has been buying up horses rejected by the Vienna school, which has a stud at Piber in the Austrian Alps, where the pastures are organically farmed.

Not all the colts meet the demands of the school: some are never chosen and sold on; some are discarded after a year or two; others, including many mares, are broken to harness or as riding horses and sold. At least four stallions now stand at stud in Britain. So, it is not surprising that someone chose the second string to mimic the classical performers.

For the first time, the Spanish Riding School is touring with eight mares (with foals at foot), two colts and six fillies. They will have five

grooms of their own, where the performing stallions have ten. As is the custom at home each night, two grooms will sleep in camp beds beside their charges to reassure them and guard them from harm. It takes at least ten years from initial training, which begins at three years, to teach the *Haute Ecole* movements. The horse's value is inestimable, since all do staid duties, yet they are insured for a token £10,000 to cover veterinary bills and other expenses.

"To give them a value would be absurd," Mr Fressler says. "There is no way you could replace one at that standard. We have to have a special policy, since horse insurance generally stops at 16 years, and we have very few performing horses under that age. I think the oldest coming to Britain is 24."

Arthur Kottas, the first chief

rider, who rides the brown/black stallion Favory Alea II, one of the few foals which failed to change colour, is sceptical about the damage done to their popularity by so-called circus acts. "People appreciate the patience and care that have gone into producing work that looks so effortless. It is the result of horse and rider partnerships lasting many years. You do not have to understand a subject to know when it is done well."

What they do so well is to demonstrate what a supple horse bred for a specific purpose is capable of. It is not the walk, trot or canter of a countryside riding school, but it is not a circus trick either. At the stud in Piber, both mares and young stock perform the movements naturally in the field.

The celebrated "airs above the ground", or classical jumps, have

their origin in the battlefield, as a means of attacking the enemy. All horses are now descended from six stallions bred for that purpose and all bear their names: Favory, Siglavy, Conversano, Neapolitano, Pluto and Maestro.

The white stallions are probably more popular than ever in Britain. A neighbour of mine acquired one which had performed in the Portuguese bullring before being given to an English diplomat. He ended up with Kenneth Quicke, who wrote a book, *Immortal Henry*, about the fascinating experience of owning such a talented and charismatic animal. His account describes how it danced in rubber shoes at balls, had an enviable film career and proved an easy and willing hack from which to lead his son Stephen's pony.

He wrote: "Lipizzaners are a smallish breed, seldom more than 15 hands, have a gentle temperament and submit easily to training. They have a kind and exhilarating personality and large, expressive eyes, partly owing to centuries of training give the most balanced ride you could wish for."

The one I rode was a descendant of Siglavy and was stabled with a talented dressage rider in Spain. He certainly gave a balanced ride, but his "exhilarating personality" left me floundering in the dust of the sand school.

Modern dressage is dominated by a German ideal, based on the breeding of "warm bloods", a cross of heavy farm-working animals and finer stock. The weight in the hands and the forward movement of the horse have for years been more fashionable than the compact confirmation and collected work of breeds like the Lipizzaner. But there is a backlash.

The Mediterranean breeds have never enjoyed such popularity. And no more spectacular example of this popularity exists than the Spanish Riding School of Vienna, which has maintained its act in pure form for such a long time.

WEEKEND COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

Hooked on fly fishing

NOVEMBER 7-9

Practise for the piste: Dry-ski weekends on artificial ski slope in Weymouth, Dorset. From Parkdean Holidays (0191-224 0500). For two or three nights, prices from £70.

Fishing, canoeing and boating weekends near Closely, Devon, with Farm and Cottage Holidays (01237 479698). Prices for a three-night break, self-catering, from £103 for four people.

English landscape painting at the Earnley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). £142 residential, £98 non-residential.

Poetry and prose of the Great War: Chamber music for amateurs: Modern gardening: Hat making for beginners. Some courses this weekend at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). From £159.

Drama workshops at the Unicorn Theatre for Children, Arts Theatre, Great Newport St, London WC2 (0171-379 3280). Sunday 9 November. Playwriting and Teddy Bears. Price per session £7.50.

Calligraphy and cards: Writing memoirs: Cities of the Baltic (art history). All at Belstead House, Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 686321). From £75.95 inclusive.

Woodland wildlife in autumn: Painting plants: Improve your watercolours. A selection of painting courses at Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, in Constable country (01208 298283). From £79 inclusive.

Making the most of your camera: Portrait techniques: Décoquage. At the Hill Residential Centre, Aberystwyth (01495 333777). £88 per course.

The world's first city: London in the 19th century: Linen and blouses;



Paint woodland wildlife at Flatford Mill, November 7-9

Chinese brush painting. At Knuston Hall, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). From £89, inclusive.

Fish and vegetarian cookery. At Ynyshir Hall, Machynlleth, Mid-Wales (01654 781209). £170, inclusive.

Smallholder workshops on keeping sheep: At the Rare Breeds Centre, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent (01233 861493). Also courses on poultry, pigs, ducks and geese. From £18 per session. B&B nearby.

Buying and owning a PC: Write a short story. This weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). From £114.

Medieval and Renaissance palaces of Europe. At the University of Oxford, Rawley House, Oxford (01865 270360). Price £44.

NOVEMBER 14-16

Cycle touring. Three-night cycling breaks in Cheshire with Byways Bike Breaks (0151-722 8050). Price £110 including luggage transfer.

The road to Santiago and Muslim Spain: Exoticism and Western architecture: Images of the body. Three courses this weekend at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall, Cambridge (01954 210636). Prices from £111 inclusive.

The courts of Renaissance Italy: The winter sky: Victorian and Edwardian architecture in London: Bridge, improve your ACOI bidding. Promoting a sense of wellbeing. A selection of courses at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Price £159 residential, £99 non-residential.

Colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries: Music of the 1920s and 1930s. All this weekend at Wedgwood Memorial College, Barlaston, Staffordshire (01782 372105). Price £36, including full board accommodation.

Cooking for Christmas: Scottish country dancing: Pastels for beginners. All this weekend at the Earnley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). winter brochure now available. Weekend rates from £142 residential, £98 non-residential.

Scrabble weekend: Bridge for beginners: Gourmet cooking. All this weekend in the Welsh Marches with Acorn Activities (01432 830083). Price £125, inclusive.

Autumn fruit and flowers in gouache: Egyptology. Two courses this weekend at Belstead House Education Centre, Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 886321). From £75-£95 inclusive.

Improve your duplicate bridge at Hawthorn Bridge, Hove, East Sussex (01895 824240). Price from £127.

Train driving in Wales. Learn to drive a steam train with the



Get away from it all: try fly fishing in the Gramplians, November 14-16, with all equipment, instruction and accommodation included

Fairbourne and Barnmouth Railway line in Gwynedd for £98 per day (01341 250362). Practical courses on all aspects of steam trains on four engines. B&B available.

Cake design for Christmas: Crafts for Christmas: Yoga: Calligraphy. Four courses at Horncastle College, Horncastle, Lincolnshire (01507 522449). Price £87 inclusive.

Absciding, rafting, tank driving, walking: Fly fishing. All in Scotland with Tartan Collection Activities (01339 883500). Prices, including equipment, instruction and accommodation in first-class hotels, £179.

Woodcarving: Guitar ensemble weekend: Painting detail

in watercolour: Backcare workshop for those with back problems. All at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). Brochure available. Weekend rates from £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

Office life: achiever's hell or fool's paradise? At Braziers, Ipsden, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (01491 680221). Price £92, inclusive.

Conservation in action: Batik and silk painting: Working in oils. All this weekend at the Field Studies Centre, Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, in Consta-

ble country (01206 298283). Prices from £79-£104, all inclusive.

Nineteenth century dance: Floral arts: Calligraphy: Welsh. All this weekend at the Hill Residential Centre, Pen-y-Pound, Aberystwyth, Gwent (01495 333777). Price £88, full board.

Tax for the self-employed: History of the visual arts: TI for beginners: Theatre and audience. A selection of courses at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Prices from £59 residential, £59 non-residential.

The story of the First World War: First steps in parchment craft: German. All this

weekend at Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price per course £89 inclusive.

Shamrock and rose: Irish history: Literature: Wedgwood Memorial College, Barlaston, Staffordshire (01782 372105). Prices from £36, including full board.

Brochure available: Chinese wok cooking: A ride for beginners: Stained glass: Miniature painting for beginners. At the Family Course, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). Price from £142 residential, £99 non-residential.

ROBIN NEILLAD

Incarceration was not always as terrifying as we believed, an exhibition shows

Horrifying instruments of torture give a misleadingly frightful impression of what it was like to be a prisoner in the Tower of London. Geoffrey Parnell, the Keeper of Tower History, says the macabre thumbscrews, manacles and the Scavenger's Daughter — now in an exhibition, *Prisoners of the Tower: Treason, Torture and Execution*, at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds — are merely display objects, "but I can't seem to stop the yeoman warders telling people that they are the ones used".

In fact, for a prisoner of rank and means incarceration in the Tower could be almost luxurious. Among them was Henry Percy, the 9th Duke of Northumberland, whose misfortune was to give a dinner on the eve of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 to a kinsman who turned out to be one of the chief conspirators.

Found guilty of withholding knowledge of the plot, Northumberland was fined £11,000 and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Tower, although he was eventually released after 16 years. Even after paying the huge fine, the wealthy Northumberland was well able to ply the officers of the Tower with gifts and gratuities, in exchange for which he was allowed to make the Tower a home from home. The degree to which he did so would have seemed incredible to anyone who had been imprisoned in the Tower under the rigidly oppressive regime of the Tudors.

Dissatisfied with the first quarters he was allotted in the Bloody Tower, Northumberland complained that they were "noisy" and had himself moved to the Martin Tower, where he was to live in considerable style in apartments that ran to a study, a library, a great chamber, a withdrawing room, two drawing rooms and an accommodation for some of his 20 servants. For seven years, he even leased lodgings in the nearby Brick Tower for his son and his son's tutor, and visited them regularly. He was not so assiduous about keeping in touch with his wife.

Northumberland had been friendly with Sir Walter Raleigh years before they became fellow prisoners in the Tower. Raleigh, sentenced on similarly flimsy evidence, and they shared many interests. They regularly visited each other's quarters to smoke tobacco and discuss philosophy or chemistry, sharing their conversation with the men of learning whom they paid to attend on them, such as Thomas Harriot, the mathematician and Robert Hughes the geographer.

Raleigh had apartments in the upper storey of the Bloody Tower with his wife and son Carew, who was born in the Tower in 1605. Today the Bloody Tower is furnished to evoke Raleigh's imprisonment with a bed and other furniture, rush matting on the floor, *objets d'art* and a tapestry — a far cry from the dank prison cell of our imaginings. But Raleigh's end was not a happy one. He was executed in 1618 after 13 years of imprisonment. Refusing a blindfold, he said: "Think you I fear the shadow of the axe when I fear not the axe itself?" He asked to feel the edge of the axe and then said: "This is a sharp medicine but it is a physician for all diseases."

Some of the Tower's instruments of torture were not even acquired until the 19th or early 20th century. "That was a time when the image of the Tower as a place of torture and punishment was being enhanced," Dr Parnell says. "Things like our executioner's mask — actually part of a Scold's Bridle, altered to make it look fearsome — are 19th-century objects that were either manufactured or purchased to beef up that romantic notion," Dr Parnell says. The rack had been decommissioned by 1675, "but a lot of visitors think people were still having their



Left: the iron Scold's Bridle, designed for the public humiliation of "unruly" women, was never used in the Tower of London but was acquired in the 19th century as a curiosity to "enhance" its historical collection

Right: the Irish 18th-century gibbet was typically displayed by a busy roadside as a warning to passersby of the likely penalty if they committed a crime

Sent for a stretch in the Tower

limbs stretched during the 17th and 18th centuries. They're horrified to find that we've done more executions in the 20th century. Show them our chair used in 1941 for shooting a German spy and they're quite unimpressed.

Whatever the history of the pieces on show in Leeds, there is evidence of nearly 100 instances of torture at the Tower, many of them in the reign of Elizabeth I. Full use of the rack or the Scavenger's Daughter would have caused serious injury or death, but they were usually applied gradually and some of the prisoners quickly recovered on being set free.

"One of our curators tried the Scavenger's Daughter years ago and he found it excruciatingly painful after about an hour," Dr Parnell says. "It's an instrument of restraint that compressed the body, and that's when your spine begins to tell you things."

Perhaps the fact, and shame, of being in prison at all were as painful as torture itself.

The exhibition also has plaster casts of inscriptions scratched or carved by prisoners on to their cell walls. One, Charles Bailey, carved a message on a wall of the Beauchamp Tower that echoes the sentiments of prisoners through the

Torture tools were acquired just for romantic notions

ages: "The most unhappy man in the world is he that is not patient in adversities. For men are not killed with the adversities they have but with ye impatience which they suffer..."

Bailey was later released, having been put on the rack and given his torturers details of the Ridolfi plot of 1571 against Elizabeth I.

Only one famous Tower prisoner — Anne Boleyn — died by the sword. When Nicholas Bole, the head of public relations at the Royal Armouries Museum, was asked recently by a television reporter whether the axe or the sword was the more painful method of execution, he replied: "Lucky I am in no position to judge."



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SUE CORBETT

• The exhibition "Prisoners in the Tower: Treason, Torture and Execution" is at the Royal Armouries Museum, Armoueries Drive, Leeds (0113-231 1999) until January 4

• The Tower of London, Tower Hill, London EC3 (0171-779 0165) is open daily except December 24-26 and January 11-Nov 11 (10am-4pm. Tues-Sat 9am-4pm)

Railway stories to get all steamed up about

Life on the fast track meant sharing a bed

There is a lasting glamour about the days of steam and the men who worked the engines, *Sue Corbett* writes. Drivers of the 1920s and 1930s were the highest paid working-class men of their time and the envy of every schoolboy.

But life on the footplate was hard, particularly for the fireman. On a trip of 160 miles, he might have to shovel eight tons of coal, and the heat from the firebox was often so fierce that it would burn the hairs off his legs, even through his overalls. "I haven't a single hair on my legs now," says James Lee, 74, a retired fireman on the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) from Doncaster.

Recently, Mr Lee and his brother Walter, 69, also a retired fireman, went with 24 of their former footplate colleagues to talk about the old days of steam to staff at the National Railway Museum in York. They are helping the museum create an oral archive about a harsh working lifestyle of which most of modern Britain is totally ignorant.

"You hear about miners, fishermen and steelworkers," Walter says, "but our job, in some respects, was equally difficult. Today's health and safety people would have closed down the footplate part of the railway industry because of unsafe and unsavoury working conditions."

Theirs was a lifestyle that would horrify the modern-day railwayman with his comfortable cab, better signalling systems, better brakes and a vigilance device going off every 40 seconds to keep him awake.

David Mosley, of the National Railway Museum's education service, is conscious that time is running out to collect the old railwaymen's experiences. "Some men who are in their sixties and seventies still have a lot to tell us."

The Lees, who notched up 33 years on steam trains between 1939 and 1967, came from a long-



On a 160-mile journey a fireman might shovel eight tons of coal

established railway family, totting up 175 railway years between them from the time of their grandfather down to Walter's son, Christopher, 36, who works for Railtrack. Their father, James William, fired the first Pacific engine into King's Cross, London, in the 1920s.

W e lived in a district of Doncaster called Hyde Park," Walter says. "There were drivers, firemen, guards and shunters all living together. My mother fed my dad on one shift, me on another, and Jim on a third, so the table in our house was never unset and food was always being prepared."

Life under steam was not only harsh, it was highly regimented. Footplate men, aged 15, cleaning locomotives, worked up to become a cleaner, aged 16 or 17, and were allowed out firing engines only if the depot was short of a fireman, probably on goods trains. After about 300 shifts as a temporary fireman (which could take from two to five years) a man could become a fireman, first on local goods trains and working up to express passenger trains. A railwayman might be in his fifties before he qualified to drive the top express passenger trains.

"Some drivers were disciplinarians," Walter says, "and wouldn't

speak to their fireman all the shift. I've heard tales of drivers getting a piece of chalk and marking the fireman's position and the driver's place, and saying, 'Don't overstep the mark'."

That attitude must have made life difficult in some of these railwaymen's lodgings. As a fireman in the 1940s, Leonard Glasspool used to work on the Bristol to Leeds run, out of Leeds and back the next, which meant staying at the engineers' line at Leeds, where he was expected to share a double bed with a driver.

Conditions were similar in London, Walter says. "When dad was lodging at Kels Town, he'd be getting into someone else's bed just got out and it would still be warm."

"Express drivers were *crème de la crème*," he says. The pay was good. The men drove the large Pacific trains the express journeys to London were on extra money — they £20 a week, when the average weekly wage was £5. They were known as the Mahogany because they could afford furniture."

Now the *crème de la crème* on record at the National Railway Museum and a precious part of our railway heritage has been preserved.

• National Railway Museum, Leeman Road, York YO14 3JL



Mystery
oiled
with new
money

Kuwait • 26

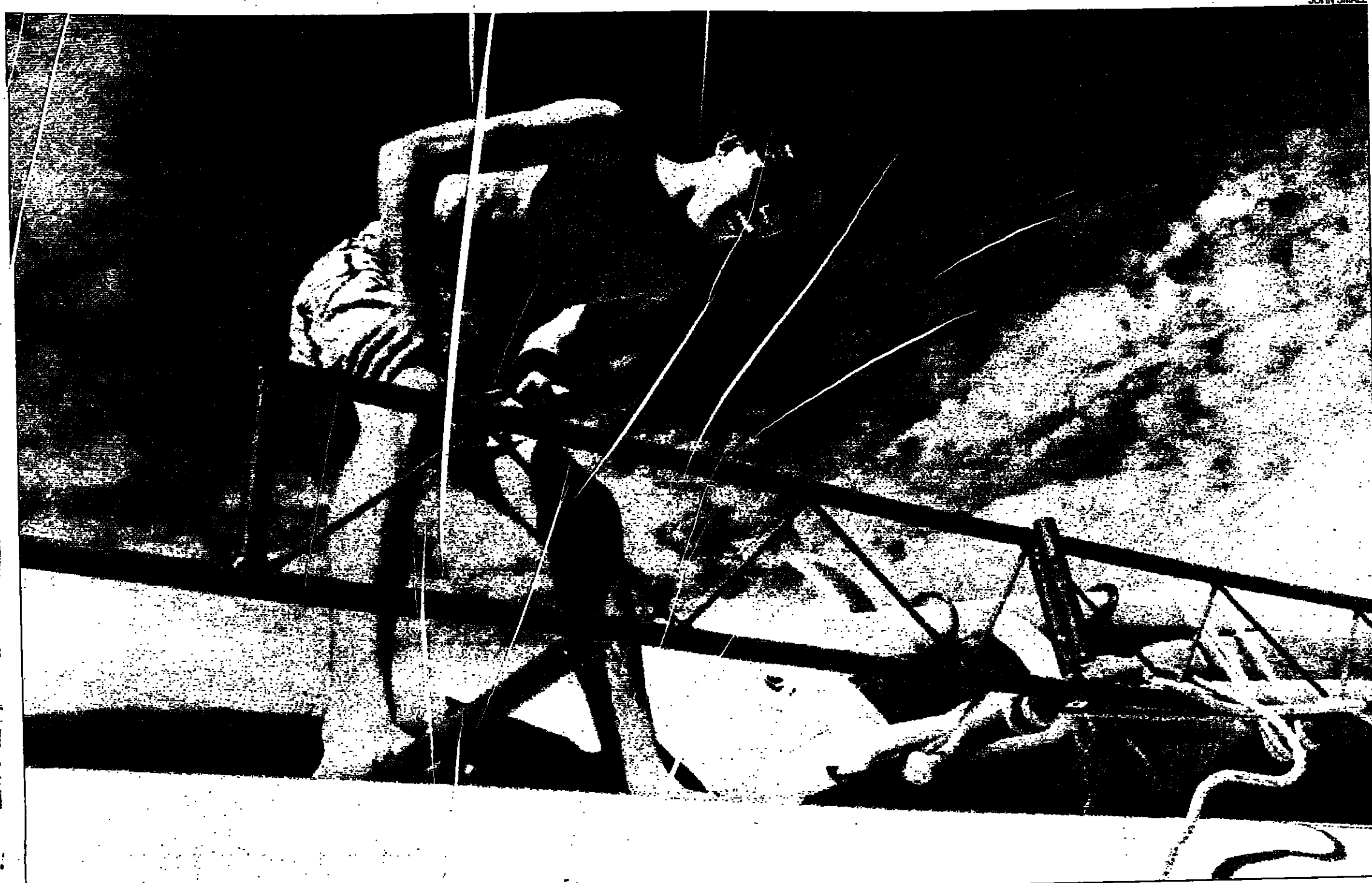
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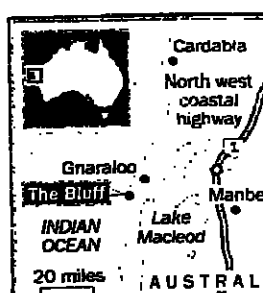
Skiing • 28



Where life is a beach and a board



Waiting for the big one: a surfer helps to unload boards at the Bluff, a remote stretch of coastline hundreds of miles north of Perth, which has some of the best surf in the world



BLUFFER'S GUIDE

■ Jeremy Hart bought his flight to Perth from Qantas (0345 747767). Priors for a return Apex flight from Heathrow's Terminal Four — where Qantas moved last Sunday — start at £655, with a minimum stay of 14 days.

■ In Perth, he stayed at the Criterion Hotel, 560 Hay Street, Perth (08 618 9325 5355, fax 08 618 9325 4176). B&B costs £70 a night for a double room.

■ The journey to the Bluff takes 18 hours by road from Perth. Four-wheel drives, a necessity in these parts, can be rented in Perth or in Carnarvon after a bus or flight from Perth. The Bluff is two hours' northwest of Carnarvon near the settlement of Gnaraloo.

■ Before making the trip to the Bluff, contact Surfing WA in Perth (08 618 9448 0004).

■ The Beach by Alex Garland (Penguin, £5.99).

■ These eight beaches offer surfing that is as good as the Bluff — but several are almost as hard to reach: Lagundi Bay, Nias Island, Indonesia; Tavarua Island, Fiji; Huntington Beach, Orange County, California; Fistral Beach, Newquay, Cornwall; El Zonzal, La Libertad, El Salvador; North Shore, Oahu, Hawaii; Torquay, Victoria, Australia; Biarritz, France.

The dedicated surfers of the Bluff, Western Australia, have only one aim in life — to catch that perfect wave before it crashes on to the coral, says Jeremy Hart

I was the FNG. NG stands for New Guy. Lily-liver white, as starched as a city stockbroker and his Jermyn Street shirt, I stuck out like a sore thumb in a hedonistic world of spliffs and surfing. I was at the Bluff, stuck to the most remote stretch of the Western Australian coastline, closer to Singapore and Bali than Sydney or Brisbane. Hundreds of miles north of Perth, the Bluff is a strip of sand no wider than a tennis court, between the red haze of the outback and the deep blues of the Indian Ocean, where some of the best surfing waves in the world break.

If this was Alex Garland's sun-kissed nirvana of *The Beach*, the cult novel where heaven and hell eventually meet on the golden shores of the shark-infested South China Sea, I would be the kiss of death, the messenger taking news of the Bluff, surfing's last secret, to the outside world. Sun-kissed and shark-infested like *The Beach* and inhabited by a transient tribe, the Bluff, too, is ultimately protected from package tourism and blatant commercialism by its remoteness. Like a nudist beach, it is coveted by the curious but avoided by all but the most devoted.

These are the Capricorn Drifters, named more for their tropical alfresco habitat than their inability to put down roots. A few dozen of Australian surfing's most dedicated. They are living proof that John Major's dream of a classless society does exist — all less caves 9,000 miles away in a uniform of sun-bleached by the vicious yet vibrant coral, trader Mark Tevas (san-

dals) and tans as deep as the Indian Ocean, these long-haul disciples of surfing spread out over half a mile of craggy and partially sandy cove north of Carnarvon in an amphibious life on the edge of society.

It is a transient but closed commune. Unannounced arrivals without an introduction are not welcome. Rookie surfers are even less accepted. Put a virgin surfer in the thundering waters of the Indian Ocean at the Bluff, where it crashes on to coral as sharp as a knife, and he will end up as shark food. You have to be crazy to surf the Bluff. So I didn't.

In a world with no social order, Mark is as close as anyone comes to being at the top — so his is the biggest cave at the Bluff. It is a little corner of paradise, albeit a noisy one. The roar of the ocean beating at the entrance drowns out most normal conversation. Suddenly, the spray from a

denly this huge chunk of roof fell on to the pillow behind me, just where my head had been.

Phil "Oggie" Ogden is the ultimate boss at the Bluff, although the title is a passive one. Life here is based on ageism. Fortysomething Phil, like thirtysomething Mark, is old. Respect, therefore, is due — most of the time. "I have had to throw a few people out for misbehaving," he says. Details are sketchy. Fighting, dealing and generally rocking the Bluff are crimes, punishable by ostracism.

Oggie and his wife Sue run the Munch Box, a land-locked

surf, he looks more like a mincing ballet dancer than a macho surfer. But once in the water it is a different matter, as he bulls and powers his way through the foaming surf, ducking his head each time a wave crashes over him.

Eventually, he is out in smooth water with the rest of the wave-hunting pack. Surfers take their turns to ride the waves, lining up as if in a bus queue, except that here they wait prostrate on six-foot fibreglass thruster boards. At last in pole position, Mark sees a wave with his name on it. It rears up behind him like the maw of a whale. His arms spin into a flailing motion and his board hooks itself into the power of the wave.

Now on his feet, kept in place by sticky surf wax, Mark bends low as he skins across the face of the blue wall of water. A tube opens in front of him like the entrance to a tunnel and he steers directly into its centre. A few seconds pass as Mark rides out of sight inside the cavernous hole and then, like a bullet, he shoots out into the bright sunlight.

The surfers at the Bluff are not the biggest creatures in these waters. Sharks and dolphins share the surf, too. As yet there have been no duels for superiority. The sharks are well enough fed by the shoals of fish passing through the region, so they tend to ignore the surfers — although tense moments are not uncommon.

Time matters little in these parts, but on most evenings around five the Munch Box plays host to do-or-die card sharks locked in another game of chance, one I can at last join in.

"How can you come up here and not surf?" Eric demands from over the top of his sun-bleached cards. I shrug. "How many people went to Woodstock for the music?" I reply. Eric is cool with that. The Bluff is about more than surfing. It is a way out of life, the last great escape.

It takes a lot to ruffle the cave surfers. Stolen slots in the surf and robbed girlfriends make waves — but not for long. "When the waves are bad and it has been days without a surf, there's some static — usually over card games," says Mark. "But when the surf's up, that's all it takes to make us content. There's nothing to be tense about here."



The Munch Box serves a "belly-busting" ten-inch hamburger

"When the surf's up, that's all it takes to make us content. There's nothing to be tense about here"

Mark Antal, however, is a little crazier than most. Each year the former Australian Rules football player drives his dilapidated jalopy 3,000 miles from suburban Melbourne across the Nullarbor Plain, and then a further 18 hours north from Perth to reach the Bluff. It takes three

gargantuan waves, the seventh in an already massive swell, sweeps inside, catching Mark and his mate Eric by surprise. It drenches their legs. It is the closest I get to the surf all day. "That's the biggest one today," Mark says, though he seems unperturbed. "Sometimes the sea gets in here and we have to move all the stuff out." Not that there is a huge amount of "stuff" to remove. Cardboard boxes half-full with tins of food, a gas stove, and a few sleeping bags — these make up the household contents of the Big Cave, as his abode is known.

A little more than ten feet high, the ceiling of the den is lined with a fragile mixture of coral and limestone — bits of which have a bothersome habit of falling off at inopportune moments. "One night I was lying in bed and, for no reason at all, I sat bolt upright," Mark recalls. "Sud-

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مركزاً من راحل



Well wrapped up: a cheesemaker uses muslin (also called cheesecloth) to create a "Wensleydale ball" — the traditional method which allows the cheese to breathe and develop flavour without drying out

Say cheese, and the whole town smiles



The old cheese town of Hawes in Upper Wensleydale

Wallace and Gromit are not the only ones who appreciate a fine piece of Wensleydale cheese. **Christian Dymond** is partial to the odd slice or two himself, so he headed for the Yorkshire Dales to see how it is made.

The ticket seller for the "cheese experience" was sporting a vibrant tie with a design festooned with mice, so I took this to be part of the corporate dress at Wensleydale Creamery in the Yorkshire Dales. Not so. The mouse was Mickey, the tie came from Florida and Ged Cuerden was wearing it because it went with his waistcoat.

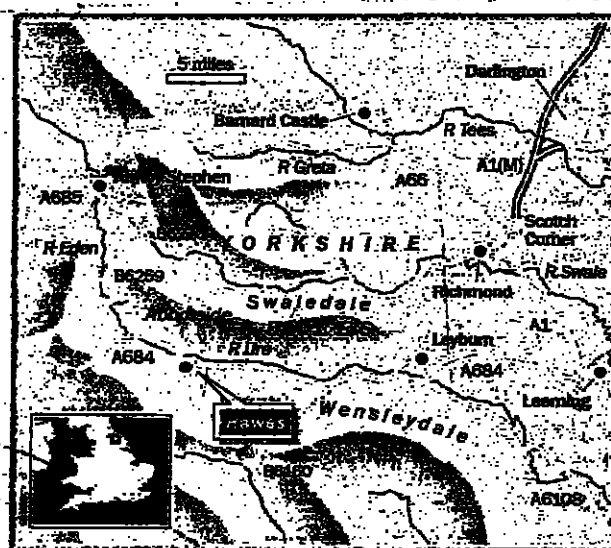
However, it would not have surprised me if the creamery had indeed turned the mouse to good promotional use. Although, as it happened, the

cartoon characters Wallace and Gromit, the stars of *A Close Shave* and *The Wrong Trousers*, came along instead — and everyone knows that Wallace and Wensleydale go together like cheese and biscuits. A quarter of a million small cheeses with the duo's logo have been sold by Hawes creamery in the past year.

In 1992, the company was on the verge of closure. Now it produces more than 1,000 tons of cheese a year (though this is small beer compared with main manufacturers) and in 1996 the creamery attracted a quarter of a million visitors. Numbers are up 14 per cent this year.

The 1950s buildings are rather prosaic but the setting, on the outskirts of town, is idyllic. Cows peered languidly over the drystone wall as I drove into the car park and later, when I was in the 130-seat restaurant, a group of schoolchildren streamed across the field as if they were taking part in an old-fashioned cereal commercial.

North of the valley, a great wedge of hill called Abbotside imposes its presence on the tourist centre of Hawes. It was at Abbotside, and elsewhere in Wensleydale, that Cistercian monks perfected the art of cheesemaking after their arrival in the 12th century. This is explained in a ten-minute video on the history and production of the cheese, which is the first port of call in this "experience".



Commercial manufacture of cheese started in Hawes exactly 100 years ago, when a corn merchant, Edward Chapman, frustrated with the differing quality of cheese that was available from the local farmers, decided to buy their milk and make a uniform product instead.

Since then there have been ups and downs but nothing as serious as the announcement in April 1992 by its owner, Dairy Crest, that the creamery was to close with the loss of 59 jobs, about 20 per cent of the town's working population. Rationalisation meant transferring production from Yorkshire to Lancashire — a

move which caused predictable outrage throughout the country. William Hague, the local MP, apparently left his sick bed to join the campaign to keep the factory open, and the headline writers in the newspapers had a field day. "Hard cheese for famous Dales brand" and "Wensleydale workers see their fortunes crumble" were two offerings.

The protests had their effect. A management buyout ensured the factory's survival and production started again in time for Christmas that year. Then the headlines read "Cheesy grins all round for dairy".

A year and a half later, the doors were opened to the public. "We wanted to create



Wallace and Gromit promote the Wensleydale cheese

more employment, make use of some redundant buildings and market the cheese," says Alice Amsden, a creamery director whose great-granduncle was Edward Chapman. Mr Chapman gets a mention on an information board in the museum, and so does Kit Calvert — translator of the 23rd Psalm into Yorkshire dialect — who saved the factory from closure in the 1930s and ran it for many years.

The museum is small, but it successfully demonstrates how the fate of Wensleydale is inextricably linked with cheese. Exhibits include old stone cheese presses for communal use in the villages, butter and cheese-making equipment from the past, a typical Dales farmhouse kitchen from the 1920s (the chair without arms was for women so they had the freedom to knit, nurse the baby or make a rug) and newspaper cuttings from the crisis of 1992.

After that, a wheelchair ramp takes you to the viewing gallery so you can see the cheese being made on the other side of four large windows. Every day, 7,000 gallons of milk from 45 local farms are put into seven stainless steel vats and the process begins.

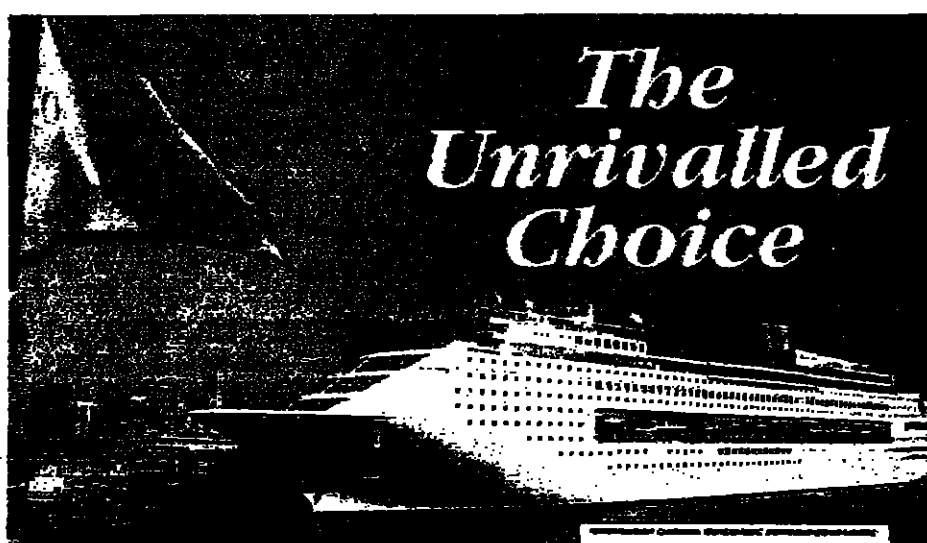
Each vat is half an hour ahead of the one next door, which means that at one end the milk is being poured in, while at the other the cheese is being pressed by hand into cheese moulds. All this winds

down by 2pm so, if you want to see the process, make sure you visit early. Late arrivals get a digestible demonstration in the video room instead. You turn one gallon of milk into small cheese in half an hour with two plastic bowls, jar knife, a "starter" culture, net and salt.

A logical end of the "experience" is, of course, a sample of cheeses — traditional, smoked and an Wensleydale, and Walsdale with additions such as cranberries, onion and apricots and ginger.

I was this part of the exhibition which particularly enjoyed. 17-year-old Robert Pritchard, from Hampshire, was at the creamery with his parents and was suffering severe hunger pangs. Pritchard, his mother, was also appreciative of the museum's simple but effective, the prices are reasonable, the food in the restaurant is excellent, and every friendly," she said. Wallace and Gromit can be everywhere in the shop, the result of a licensing agreement between Wensleydale Creamery and the BBC.

Mind you, if you Wallace what the cheese experience would probably say, "the moon", the moon, Grand Day Out being of cheese.



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WHERE DO I START?
<http://www.wensleydale.co.uk/index.htm> takes you to an exhaustive Wensleydale home page, which includes instructions on ordering miniature cheeses by mail, and the exhortation that "apple pie without Wensleydale is like a kiss without a squeeze".
<http://www.foodhall.co.uk/aff/pages/welsh.html> is a good introduction.

KEE-CHING THE BEST DEAL.
Make yourself popular with one click of the mouse at the well-named <http://www.pressofmind.ltd.uk/pressofmind.htm> by ordering fine cheese and wipe hampers from about £15. Orders in excess of £100 get the chance to win a jeroboom of Veve Cioquot. Monty Python connoisseurs will not, as I was, be fooled by the free samples of cheese being offered at Henry Wensleydale's Old Cheese Emporium ("Purveyors to the Gentry and to the Poverty-Stricken Too") at <http://www.wensleydale.co.uk/aff/pages/welsh.html>.

CHEESE



WEBWORLD

www.dccomp.com.au/sdp/au/cheese.htm. More trustworthy is <http://www.foodhall.co.uk/aff/pages/welsh.html>, where £4.99 will get you a cheesemaking kit.

MUGGING-UP
<http://www.cheesewizard.com/GLOSSARY/AGLOSSARY.htm> contains a glossary of terms and details of mostly US-based cheese

festivals and on-line workshops. Among a host of competitors, <http://www.ne.com.au/hcs/> looks like the most straightforward guide to cheesemaking at home. Scan foodie magazine recipes and browse through definitions in the *Food & Drink Dictionary* at <http://www.epicurious.com>, like the charming definition of cheese as "milk's leap towards immortality".

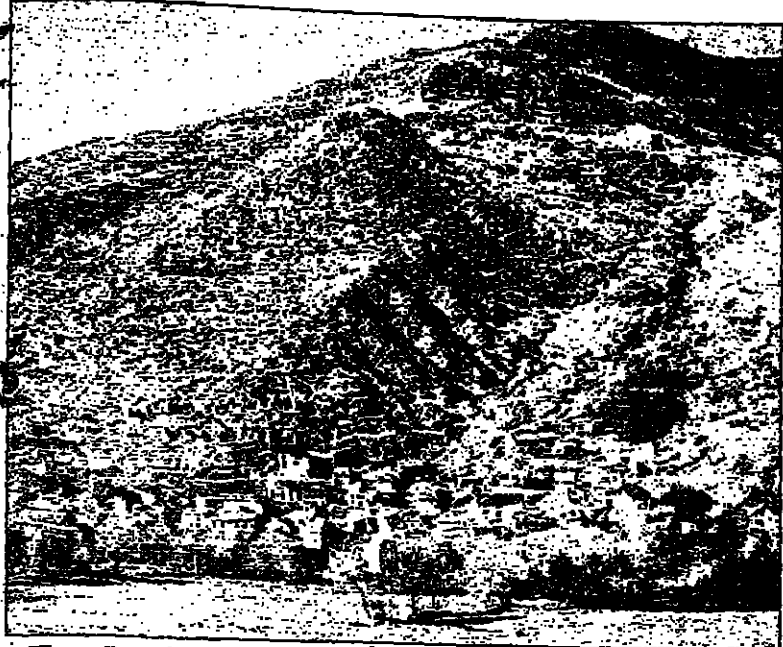
WELL, I NEVER!
Visit Britain's best known cheese-lovers, Wallace and Gromit, at any one of nearly 5,000 Web sites. Start at <http://www.walsdale.com/gmac/ubig.htm>, where you can download snippets of Wallace talking about cheese. The Cyber-Cheese-Chat Chamber at <http://www.eyols.com/rnu2867/cheese.htm> is nothing to do with dairy products, just cheesy topics of debate.

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Pyrenees: Step back into history as well as across the border that divides France and Spain, says Martin Symington



The valley of Valcabollère in French Catalonia, celebrated in verse by Hilaire Belloc and (right), Auberge Les Ecureuils, or the Squirrels Inn



Clash of cultures on the smugglers' trail

Do you remember an inn, Miranda?
Do you remember an inn?

Sitting on the stone terrace of the Auberge Les Ecureuils while sipping a glass of homemade honey liqueur, I simply could not get the Hilaire Belloc couplet off my mind. I watched dusk closing in on the mountain hamlet of Valcabollère as a cowherd, wielding a long stick, drove his five black-and-white charges down the narrow main street. The verse continues: And the tending and the spreading Of the straw for a bedding. And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees And the wine that tasted of the tar? And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers (Under the dark of the vine verandah)?

Belloc travelled through this region of the Pyrenees in 1909 and made numerous curmudgeonly observations about French Catalonia and its people. On one occasion, however, he graciously declared, "the hospitality of the place is so great that you will wish to stay there", for it had "a most delicious inn, with an innkeeper of the very best". This was the comment that put me in mind of Auberge Les Ecureuils (the Squirrels Inn). The proprietor, Etienne Lafitte, and his father André met us on the platform of the tiny La Tour de Carol station after our two-and-a-half-hour train journey from Toulouse. The train had climbed to the high Cerdagne plateau, through the ravines of the Arize valley, gazing at glistening peaks and wedding-veil waterfalls.

The mountain scenery became more awesome still as we weaved across the border between France and Spain in the Lafittes' Land Rover. From Saillagouse, a frontier town bedecked with red and gold Catalan flags, we twisted up the Vanera valley. André proudly declared that although his *papiers* were French, his *esprit* remained defiantly Catalan. Barcelona was his capital city, he insisted, not Paris.

Laughing off his father's vehemence, Etienne took a more detached view. He explained, "We are a region of confused culture and nationality. It has been like this ever since the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, when the Catalan Cerdagne was ceded to France."

As we approached Valcabollère, Etienne pointed out the roofless shells of crumbling houses, smothered in undergrowth, tumbling down the mountainside around the surviving part of the village. "In the early part of the century, Valcabollère was one of the most important villages of the Cerdagne, with a population of 500," Etienne said. "Then came the First World War and the men were ordered to enlist for France. To avoid this, virtually the whole population moved into Spain."

Today, Valcabollère numbers 35 souls in a tightly huddled clutch of light stone houses roofed with grey, flat-tiled slates. Les Ecureuils is a former farmhouse, though, happily, in place of straw, fleas and tar, the cowshed now houses the bar and the hay loft has been converted into bedrooms with rustic shutters and en suite bathrooms.

Next morning, we crossed the old stone footbridge over a torrent of icy blue and white, to follow a steep switchback trail up the valley. The mountain was curiously barren after an unexpected thaw, its bulbous summit silhouetted against a sapphire-blue sky. Skylarks were twittering high overhead, eagles soared on thermals.

According to Etienne, we were on a path trodden for centuries by *contrebandiers*—smugglers who used to lead strings of mules laden with cognac, tobacco and clothing over the Pyrenees from France to Spain. The practice apparently continued until Spain joined the European Economic Community in 1986. "My uncle was a much-admired smuggler," said Etienne proudly. "During the Second World War, he used his skills to help Allied prisoners of war escape over these trails. His contraband business was based at Les Ecureuils. After he died, we took it over and turned it into an inn."

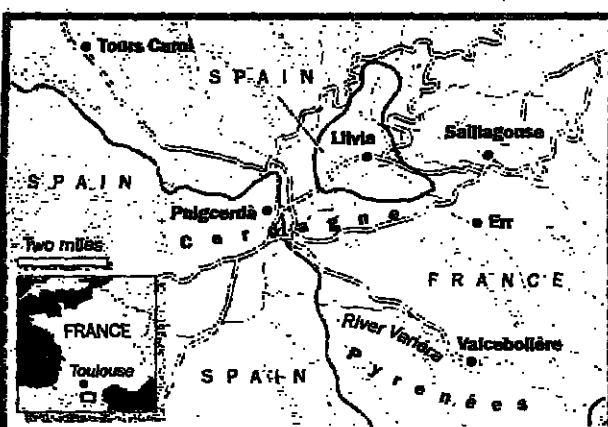
A morning's steady ascent brought us to the Lilliputian

PYRENEES FACTFILE

■ Martin Symington travelled with Intravel 01653 628862, flying from London to Toulouse and transferring to a train to go into the mountains. A seven-night stay at Les Ecureuils costs between £541 and £634, depending on departure date, based on two people sharing and including flights, dinner, bed and breakfast, rail and car transfers, cross-country ski hire, a half-day lesson and a full-day guided trek.

■ Intravel also organises a seven-night Great Winter Journey through the Pyrenees from January to April, including return flight from London, two nights B&B in Toulouse, rail travel and

three nights half-board at Valcabollère; you then go on to Barcelona for two further nights B&B. Cost with flights: £459. ■ Best time to go: For cross-country skiing, January and February; to combine this with some hiking, March and April. ■ Books: *The Pyrenees* (Rough Guides, £8.99), is useful for this border area. Most guide books confine themselves to either France or Spain, which can be irritating in a region which spans both. ■ Further Information: French Government Tourist Office, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL (0891-244123 (premium rate).



chapel of San Barnabeu, surrounded by piebald vestiges of crunch, crystal snow. Farmers, cowherds, skiers, walkers and unrequited lovers had all left votive requests scribbled on scraps of paper at a little shrine to the saint.

Apparently, Barnabeu was an early Christian from Egypt, though I was unable to fathom what his connection was with the Pyrenees. One tale has it, however, that a poor *contrebandier* from these parts sought his intercession when caught crossing the frontier with a mule-load of tobacco. The cargo miraculously turned into beans and the man was saved; more importantly, this also confirmed definitively that small-time smuggling was not sinful.

Our next venture was back up to the snow line by Land Rover for our initiation into the rites of *ski de fond*—cross-country skiing. For our purposes, it was dead simple: we simply walked, first uphill and then down, on long, narrow

skis wearing soft leather boots attached only at the toes. Up at 7,000 feet the air was steely cold and sunglasses were essential in the dazzling light. We glided through a landscape of spruce forest and frozen lakes, then began to climb up to the broad ridge of Les Crestes, which forms a natural border between France and Spain.

Eventually, we reached a summit known as Borne 504, where the tip of a giant cairn poked out of the snow. Here we were able to put a ski in each country and look out across an endless mountain-scape of jagged peaks and white slopes, falling down to valleys dotted with tightly huddled villages.

One of these is the bizarre historical anomaly of Lillia, which Etienne pointed out to me as we descended towards the Cerdagne plateau. Lillia is a little enclave of Spain, six kilometres into France. Hard though it may be to credit, the reason is this: under the terms of the 1659 treaty, all the Cerdagne's 33 villages were ceded to France. But officially, Lillia was classified as a town, not a village, and Spanish negotiators clung to this technicality.

So, more than 300 years later, a circular national frontier surrounds the village (it certainly lacks the dimensions of a town these days), where the Spanish flag flies, pesetas are the currency and tapas are displayed on bar counters. In other respects it is a rather unremarkable place. I checked

out its sturdy, fortified, 14th-century church, and a lifeless little 16th-century pharmacy, opened as a museum.

To find out more about this curiously dislocated community, I popped into a bar in search of a glass of wine and a little convivial chatter. But my fellow drinkers were grim, answering me in monosyllables. I felt distinctly unwelcome, and drank up as if downing my monthly ration in some Scandinavian liquor monopoly store.

It was a similar story in the next bar, so back to Valcabollère I fled for a sauna and last supper of traditional Catalan *boules de picolat*—pork and veal meatballs in tomato sauce. Etienne had prepared the feast himself, and joined our table after dinner, waving a *porron* of sweet Banyuls wine. The *porron* is a traditional glass vessel with a long protuberance through which you have to pour the wine straight into your mouth.

Wine was spilt, laughter filled the room, stories were told, toasts were drunk, backs were clapped, promises were made to return and Pyrenean goodwill flowed in abundance. Yes, I remember an inn, Miranda. I remember an inn.

Auberge proprietor Etienne Lafitte is continuing the area's tradition for hospitality



Auberge proprietor Etienne Lafitte is continuing the area's tradition for hospitality

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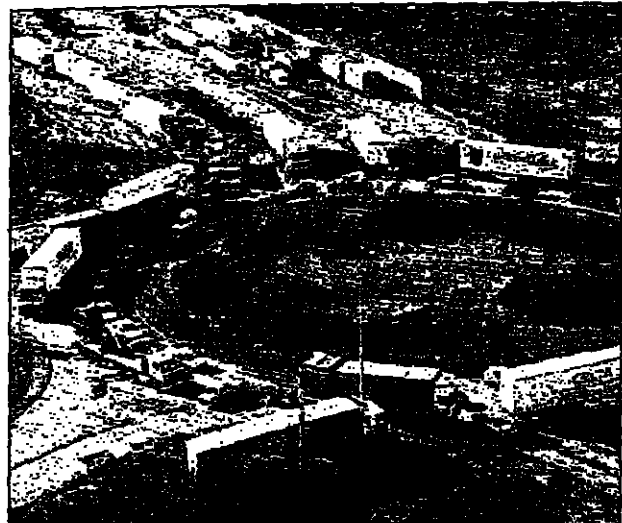
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Blockade across the Channel

THE PLANNED strike by French lorry drivers this weekend threatens to undermine a blitz on the Christmas shopping market planned by ferry companies. Steve Keenan writes.

The Channel ports are among 180 locations across France that drivers plan to blockade from tomorrow afternoon in pursuit of a pay claim. A similar dispute last year lasted 12 days and caused traffic chaos across the country. The strike is virtually certain to go ahead.

However, the ferry operators and Le Shuttle were hoping that the impact on the pre-Christmas day tripper market would be minimal. P&O European Ferries said: "Last year the French didn't block tourist cars, just freight. We kept ships running in the morning and evening to Calais and diverted daytime sailings, which are mostly freight, to Zeebrugge. It is going to be harder, but we are hoping disruption to the shopping market is minimal."



On strike: lorries near Caen in November last year

More than one million bargain hunters will cross the Dover Straits in the run-up to Christmas to buy alcohol, food and gifts. SeaFrance, one of five rivals on the Calais run, this week cut day trip prices to £1 per person, or £10 for a car and up to nine passengers. The offer undercuts other fares by more than half, and matches promotions usually run by ferry firms through newspapers. But rival operators and Le Shuttle, which charge between £24 and £29 per car for a day trip, are likely to respond.

The initiative is not confined to the cost of crossing the Channel. SeaFrance is also undercutting rivals, particularly Stena Line and Le Shuttle, on duty-free prices. These latest moves come despite a record year for the industry, with more than 20 million people crossing the Dover Straits in the first eight months of 1997.

In the lean winter months up to March, when few fare-paying holidaymakers travel, the industry has little option but to cut fares to the bone to fill empty ships and Channel Tunnel trains. A £10 ticket for a car and passengers does not even cover port fees, so the only way for the companies to make money is on duty-free and tax-free shopping.

Bill Laidlaw, operations director of SeaFrance, said: "In the winter months, well over three-quarters of travellers are day trippers. It is all about duty-free sales. You sometimes wonder if it is worth banking the cheque for the ticket."

Kuwait: The country's wealth has helped heal the wounds of the Gulf War, says Stephen McClarence

A land flowing with oil and money



The way of life based on boat-building and camel-hide trading rapidly became redundant after oil was discovered in 1938 and the dollars started to pile up. Consumerism is now a second religion

FACT FILE

- Getting there: Kuwait Airways (0171-412 0007) and British Airways (0345 222111) fly direct from Heathrow to Kuwait from 535 return. KLM (0990-750900) flies via Amsterdam from £726.
- Accommodation: Kuwait City's five-star hotels include the Sheraton (0800 353535), Safir International (00 965 253 0000) and Le Meridien (0800 404040). All charge from £145 a double, including breakfast. Cheaper hotels, at about £40, include the Phoenix (00 965 242 1051) and the Second Home (00 965 253 2100).
- Visas: British passport holders need a visa (£30). Visitors must have a Kuwaiti sponsor, though leading hotels can make the arrangements. The Kuwaiti Embassy (0171-590 3400) is open from 9am-4pm weekdays. There is officially no problem entering Kuwait if your passport has an Israeli stamp.
- When to visit: October to March is best, when daytime temperatures average 18C, but nights are cold.
- Dress: In winter, take a jacket or jumper for the evenings. Women do not need to wear an abaya — a long, black cloak — but they should cover shoulders and legs.
- The Foreign Office advises British travellers not to go near the border with Iraq, and recommends care at beaches because of unexploded mines. Visitors are also strongly advised to register with the British embassy on arrival.
- Reading: *Looking for Dilmun*, by Geoffrey Bibby (Sage International, £18.50); *War in The Gulf 1990-91*, by Edmond Ghareeb and Majid Khadduri (OUP New York, £22.50); *Middle East on a Shoestring* (Lonely Planet, £13.99).
- Kuwait Information Centre (0171-589 2929).

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The early morning ferry edges into the Arabian Gulf and the American academic sitting on deck next to us gives us a funny look. "You're tourists?" she says incredulously. "How come? There are no tourists here."

She has a point. Tourism is not big in Kuwait. The country's travel agents spend more time getting people out than getting them in. As yet, there is no Gulf War Heritage Trail though, as one guidebook points out, no one should miss the graffiti preserved under Perspex outside the US Embassy: "Thanks for Bush". It counts as a tourist site.

Westerners, such as the American academic (a law lecturer), tend to come either to stay — in well-paid, tax-free, expat jobs, all comfort zones and barbecues — or to sort out Saddam Hussein. "Yeah, Saddam," she says, as the ferry heads for an offshore island. "Watch out for landmines on the beach. There might still be a few about. They're very small and either round or square. I can't remember which."

She gazes out to sea. It is pale grey. The sky is even paler, with no discernible horizon. She fixes a point where it might be and offers a practised assessment of Life Out Here: "You've got to rethink your life. If you think in Eastern terms — you know, God will sort it out — it's fine. If you think in Western terms, you go bananas."

Ninety minutes ahead of us, through an ever-denser mist, is Failaka Island. Its Greek temple foundations, with lizards scurrying around spent cartridge cases, are the oldest remains in Kuwait by about 2,000 years.

Failaka was a leisure island, a weekend retreat, until the Iraqis turned it into a military base during the Gulf War. Now it is a ghostly place, with burnt-out cars by the roadside, luxury bungalows abandoned and left to rot, and a gutted mosque with copies of the Koran still stacked on its shelves.

There is total silence — apart from a soldier's roaring Jeep — as we trek past tumbleweeds of barbed wire to the temple, part of the 4th-century BC town of Ikaros. It will never rival the Parthenon. A maze of low stone walls leads to a few fragments of altar and a pair of re-erected pillars. They have swirling, curling capitals like the waves just over the sand dunes. And, er, that's it, until the ferry comes back in three hours.

Kuwait is no place for visible history. The discovery



A mother and daughter buying clothes in the Old Souk

of oil in 1938 brought colossal wealth and social upheaval. A traditional way of life based on boat-building and camel-hide trading became rapidly redundant as the dollars piled high.

Consumerism is a second religion. The grandchildren of pearl divers tour marble shopping malls stocked up with gold necklaces and electric lemon-squeezers. Maids tour supermarkets with mobile telephones while their mistresses sit at home dictating shopping lists. Five-year-olds watch videos and page the servants to bring them Cokes.

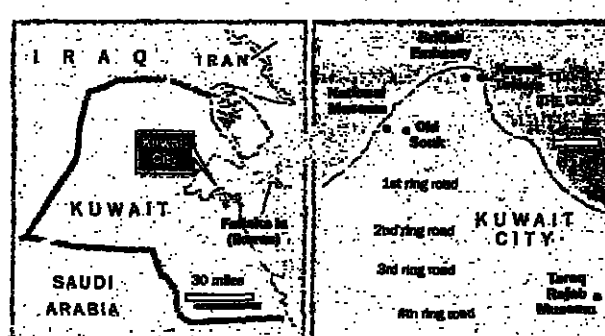
This is the land of the long car, the sleekly shining Chevrolet and the silently speeding Mercedes. No one walks anywhere

This is the land of the long car, the sleekly shining Chevrolet and the silently speeding Mercedes. No one walks anywhere

Kuwaiti sunshine. A taxi pulled up, an Oldsmobile limo with seats like oil sheikhs' thrones. We purred from Fourth Ring Road to Expressway, past bleached-out back lots, past a dangle of houses as big as banks but richer.

In a plush suburb, a black Buick swung out of a driveway. The woman driver was wearing a burqa — a traditional black veil — and sunglasses. She handed a mobile phone to a child in the back, pressed a button and the smoked-glass windows glided up tight for the air-conditioning. The car swerved down the road, dust billowing behind it; black veil, black sunglasses, black car, white eye-scorching

Most windows are tightly shuttered, sealed like tombs. The taxi driver, put on a cassette, *American Pie*. The urban dreamscape glided past — malls and garden centres, where fully grown palm trees



The ruins of a Greek settlement on Failaka Island

Tareq Rajab Museum fills the gap, a treasure house of Islamic art, a Great Exhibition of the exotic. Syrian back-scratchers jostle with bolster ends for Malaysian bridal beds, golden coats from Bukhara and an Omani necklace with a red bicycle reflector as its centrepiece. The museum's owners came back from a recent buying trip to London with 15,000 items — three tons in 150 packing cases.

The taxi pulled up at the Old Souk. "Old" is a relative term in Kuwait. The original souk, dating back 70 years, was destroyed by the Iraqis and rebuilt. It is forensically spick and span. One drip of lamb's blood on the meat market floor and cleaners leap forward with mops.

Alongside the olives and Turkish delight, spices and sticky slabs of dates, are glittering handbags and false fingerprints. Women lift their veils to try lipsticks. Men sit around drinking cardamom-flavoured coffee and smoking hookahs — a glimpse of Old Kuwait before the oil.

Aerial photographs from the 1930s show an unrecognisable town — warrens of boxy mud houses (only 100 have survived the bulldozers), the occasional mosque, dust and desert. As Dame Violet Dickson, wife of Harold Dickson, the British Political Agent (or "Our Man in Kuwait" in the early 1930s),

wrote: "There were no made roads in Kuwait town, only the sandy ground to walk on, and the traffic in the streets was people and pack animals."

Dame Violet was here for 60 years, first as Dickson's wife. He was born in Syria, was nursed by a Bedu and buried in the grounds of the British Embassy in Kuwait City. Dame Violet spent her days playing tennis and trapping grasshoppers to send to the Natural History Museum in London. "We also have a desert beetle — *Julodis speculifer dicksoni* — named after us," she wrote in *Forty Years in Kuwait*, her eccentric memoirs written in 1971, with 20 years still to go.

After Dickson's death, she stayed on in the old Political Agency — now being refurbished as a centre for Anglo-Kuwaiti relations — and occasionally took holidays back home so as to order a year's supply of tinned groceries from Harrods. Until well into her seventies she regularly drove into the desert in her battered Hummer, like so many others under the spell of the tribes and the sands.

Beyond the walls of my house and yard, modern Kuwait has grown up and all is fever and bustle," she wrote. "But beyond that again is the peace of the desert, and the desert still calls."

It still does. "What wonderful evenings we sometimes have," sighs the American academic on the ferry. "We sit in the desert and watch the animals come out — wild cats, gerbils, bat-eared hedgehogs. And the Kuwaitis still like to go back to their roots in the desert at weekends. They have tents out there — with televisions and hot and cold running water."

She sips her tonic water (alcohol is illegal). "The Kuwaitis have places all over the world. I know one who used to rave about a town with endless beaches and sparkling sea, where his family had a holiday home. I don't know if you've heard of it," he asked. "It's called Blackpool."

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Chill out in Chicago – where it's hot

Lynne Bateson enjoys a cultured, cosmopolitan city familiar from its starring role in films and TV series

I could not find George Clooney at 110 Bistro on Chicago's swanky Gold Coast, but I consoled myself with the thought that he might have used my fork. After all, my waiter James, quite a dish himself, swore he was a regular.

Spotting George and others in the cast of the television hospital drama *ER*, filmed in this town, has become quite a sport among Chicagoans. But they are a tough blasé about it and even an *ER* groupie like me can understand that. After all, for the locals, bumping into sets and camera crews is a daily occurrence.

A severe and prolonged case of déjà vu made me feel at home throughout my stay. Everywhere I went I saw places I had seen on screen. The Great Fire of 1871, fed by wooden shacks and piercing prairie winds, did the city a favour. The architects who flocked from all over the US to rebuild it also made movie backdrops to die for.

The elevated railroad, the "El", was familiar to me thanks to countless shots in *ER*. I had already gazed on Union Station's steps in blood-chilling moments in *The Untouchables*. Julia Roberts acted her heart out in the pivotal scene in *My Best Friend's Wedding* on the very boat on which, much to my amazement, I relished an architectural river tour. I have often appreciated twinkly skyscrapers from afar, but these beasts were beautiful close up.

Celebrities disappear into the discreet top-notch security of the Ritz-Carlton. The Rolling Stones stayed there for their Chicago debut of their latest world tour. There is even a resident royal, of sorts: Oprah Winfrey, the queen of American television, spends much of her time in Chicago, where her daily chat show is filmed.

Chicago is still a cultured, cosmopolitan and polite place. Its people's eyes light up and their chests puff with pride when they talk of their architecture, art and museums. But Chicagoans, especially younger ones, are now also referring to their city as "hot".

If Chicago is the pulse of America's Midwest, it has started to race. Dynamic immigrants from nearby states are flocking to the area and yuppies are leaving the suburbs for the city in droves to live in lofts, hang out – and eat.

Arthur Greenan, general manager of the Spaggiari, an elegant Italian restaurant overlooking Lake Michigan, likens the urban regeneration



Spotting the cast of *ER* is a sport among Chicagoans



Wherever I went I heard music. Fine music. Blues is part of everyday life.

to what happened in New York in the 1980s. "The club, bar and restaurant scene is exploding, but it's also volatile. Many premises close as quickly as they open," he says. Arthur has not served George, but he said Michelle Pfeiffer has eaten at his marble establishment. Personally, I would rather have had George.

You don't have to be part of a couple to party in this

vibrant city. It is awash with clubs and societies for all tastes which aim to take the lonesome out of being on your own. You can choose from singles bridge, volleyball, roller skating, biking and golf events, a gourmet dining club, square dancing for the graduate unattached and rap sessions for Jewish singles – not forgetting ballroom dancing for seniors. I even saw an advertisement for a BYOD singles evening. No, that is not a typographical error, it stands for "Bring Your Own Dog". Bow Wow!

The Museum of Contemporary Art has artsy singles bashes and every month the Hyatt Regency puts on a "Meet & Greet" evening, where for \$10, bright young things mingle and network with 25 of the city's top youngish movers and shakers while sipping hors d'oeuvres and listening to live jazz and blues.

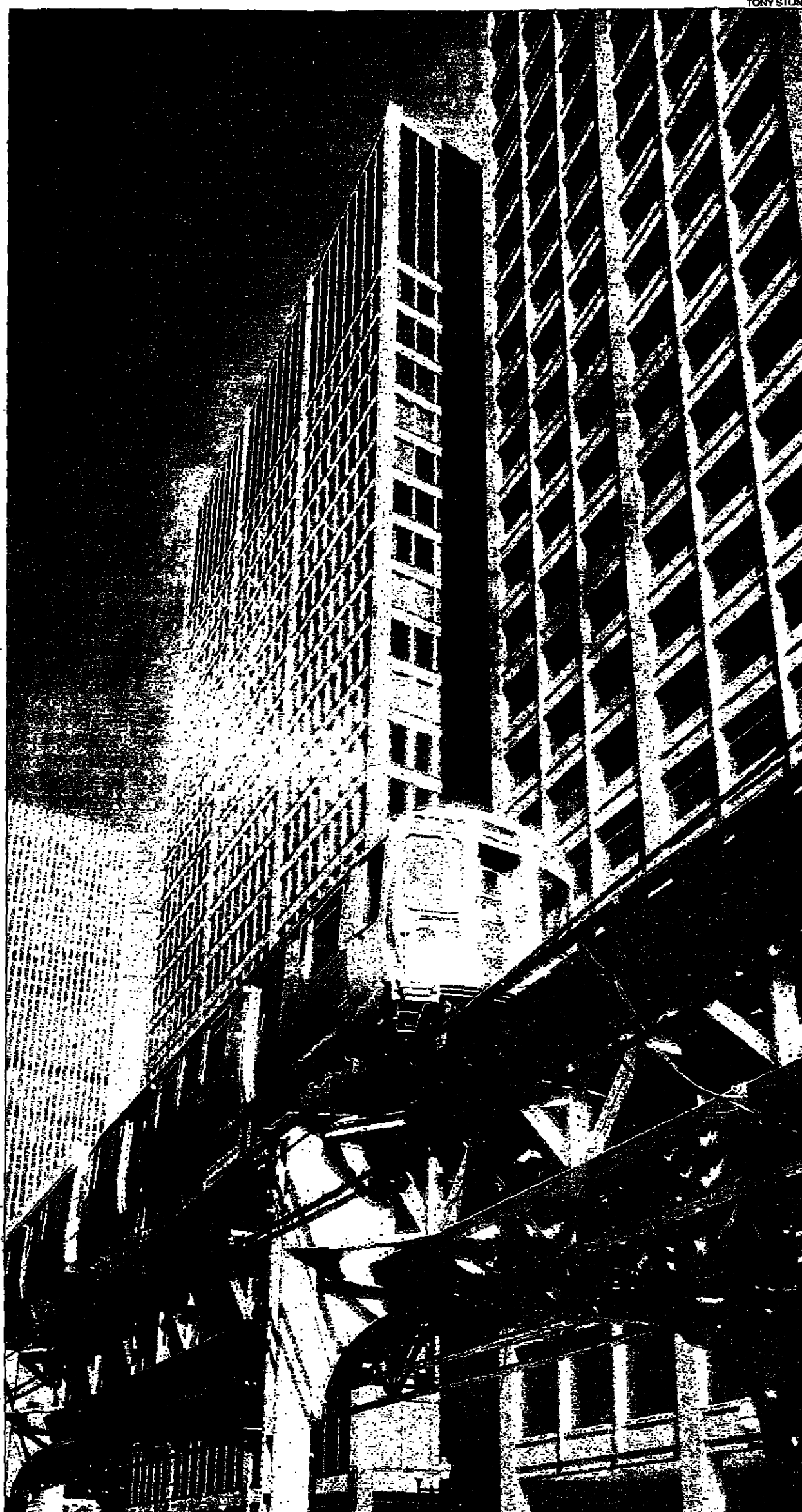
Many singles on their way up live in the affordable district of Wicker Park or the adjoining Bucktown neighbourhood in the city's northwest.

Chicago writer Nelson Algren wrote about the sordid streets of Wicker in the 1940s, but it is sordid no longer. Gentrification has created an area where ghost town meets metropolis and where students and young professionals on the first rung of the ladder rub shoulders with Puerto Ricans and an artsy crowd. Junk shops and discount furniture stores jostle juice bars and cafés serving strong java. On its streets by day I saw a businesswoman in a pink power suit one minute, and a punk with pierced nose and lips the next.

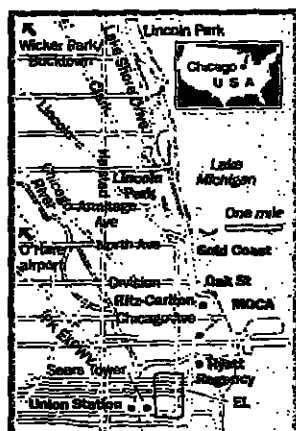
At night, Wicker throbs with the sounds of jazz and techno. Sophisticated restaurants like Confusion and Soul Kitchen serve concoctions such as the latter's "Crispy Asian Quail Salad" and "Cool Gazpacho with Yellow Tomatoes, Basil and Mint Guacamole and Crispy Tortillas". Other eateries are more bohemian, such as the eccentrically named Ear Wax, a haunt for struggling musicians with a record shop in the back.

Galleries, fringe theatres, clubs and esoteric book shops stand among run-down Victorian and Italian-style mansions with stained glass – some even have a ballroom in the attic.

Lincoln Park is Chicago's real yuppieville, with bars and restaurants and upmarket



Chicago has movie backdrops to die for: the elevated railroad, the "El", has been used by numerous film directors



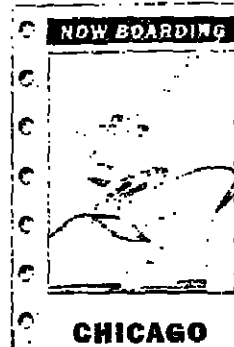
Gold Coast has tree-lined streets, sea-and-be-seen-in restaurants and designer shops. I prowled Oak Street, Chicago's answer to LA's Rodeo Drive. In search of George, who had been seen in the posh store called Barneys New York, but I only found lots of pretty people.

Wherever I went in Chicago I heard music – mighty fine music. Blues is part and parcel of everyday life. There is no canned music here. It is blues, blues and more blues, played in all the bars and restaurants. Its gentle sounds waft out of cabs whose drivers, unlike New York cabbies, do know where they are going.

Nor is Chicago particularly windy. Its nickname, "the windy city", refers to the speeches its politicians used to make.

So what is wrong with this paradise? Well, winter is not a wonderland. The Chicago area offers most snow sports, from cross-country skiing to tobogganing. But it is so bitterly cold in January and February that even New Yorkers, who are used to big freezes, complain. One sociable Chicagoan told me that if he went out without a hat in the winter he could almost hear his ear lobes crack.

I left the city with only two regrets. One, that I could not stay longer to chill out with the Chicagoans. The other? That, try as I might, I never bumped into George.



Who Goes There: You bump into more vacation-bound business people than tourists.

Get the Ball Rolling: The Chicago Office of Tourism, Chicago Cultural Centre, 78 East Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602 (407) 312 7447 2400, sends free information packs and will try to answer specific inquiries. See also the Internet at <http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Tourism>.

Perfect Timing: Avoid January and February unless you love the biting cold.

Suitcase Strategy: Take at least one smart outfit – Chicagoans err on the chic side. Bring back: Discounted designer wear. Check out Morris & Sons Co, 555 West Roosevelt Road.

Big No-nos: Some areas surrounding the Museum of Science & Industry, Greektown, Chinatown and Hyde Park can be dodgy. Avoid wandering just south of Lincoln Park.

Nasty Surprises: The ten-minute video of a woman sucking her own toe at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 East Chicago Avenue (407) 312 280 2660.

Not to be Missed: The Official Architecture Foundation River Cruise (407) 312 922 3432 makes architecture exciting. Garlic lovers should sample the complimentary roasted cloves at Bistrot 110, 110 East Pearson Street (407) 312 266 3110. Those who like their drinks long should stop at the Hyatt Regency's Big Brasserie and Bar. At 228 feet, it is the longest free-standing bar in the States.

Way to Go: Lynne Bateson flew to Chicago with BA (0345 222111). The flexible economy return fare is £1,030 and an Apex ticket, booked 21 days in advance, is currently £418 until December 12. Prices exclude taxes. Lynne Bateson stayed at the Hyatt Regency Chicago on Michigan Avenue (0345 581666), which is currently offering a Shopper's Package in which rooms start at £112 plus 15 per cent tax per night, including breakfast and various shopping discounts.

LYNNE BATESON

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SKI WEEKEND

Gearing up for the new season

SKIING starts in earnest this week, with the buying season. More ski gear is sold over these ten days of the London Ski Show, which started yesterday, than at any other time of the year. Browsing and buying may be displacement activities, but it is a psychological fact that nothing improves your skiing like having something new to do it in.

Aside from novelty, there are solid reasons — safety, comfort and performance — to counter the argument that those rusty old skis and that down-filled anorak are "good enough" for another season. A stiff upper lip is one thing, however, sneering at skiers who wear synthetic fabrics and know what torsional rigidity is simply means you are over 40.

Why put knee ligaments at risk when there are bindings that adjust to different conditions and release in new directions? Why struggle with skis and suffer in boots now superseded by models capable of curving around a coin and as comfy as bedroom slippers?

There are two excuses the new technology is bewildering and it is expensive. It now costs about £1,000 to kit out a recreational skier from



DOUG SAGER

whether it is better to buy abroad or in Britain. Generally, I recommend beginners hire both boots and skis, and intermediates invest in boots but hire skis. Experts will insist on owning their own fine-tuned gear.

Britain's ski shops are better than ever, and better than most shops in the Alps, but not so good as the best shops in the best resorts in Europe and North America. The market for equipment in Britain is simply too small for shops to invest in all the sizes, model ranges and computer boot-fitting devices that are available in places such as Aspen, Vail, Verbier or Val d'Isère.

socks to sunglasses, £2,000 if everything is top of the line.

Most skiers already have at least some gear. But all skis and boots break down after about three years of use. Bindings require annual inspection and can be unsafe after a single season's wear if not properly looked after. The best technical skiwear, on the other hand, lasts and is guaranteed for a lifetime.

There are no easy answers to the old questions of whether it is better to buy or to hire, and whether it is better to buy abroad or in Britain.

SKIS

faster. Intermediates can carve on edge at high speed like real racers. Older, experienced skiers can ski harder and longer with less effort. But most skiers will need a lesson or two to learn the correct parabolic carving technique.

Having tested more than a dozen prototype models, my choice for ski of the year is K2's Merlin, appearing for the first time this season.

The Merlin comes in three models — the III, IV and V — graded according to torsional rigidity and the degree of vibration suppression supplied by its on-board piezo-electronic flashing light, technology adopted from American stealth bombers.

Torsional rigidity indicates how well a ski will hold on ice. Of the three Merlin models, the Merlin V grabs best and gives the quietest ride, but is also the least willing to give up on one turn and get up and go into another.

Consequently, I would reserve the Merlin V for aggressive experts and suggest the Merlin IV as the best all-mountain compromise.



WEAR

One of the days when skiing meant being wet and cold in cotton and wool, or puffed up in a quilted jacket. Today, an integrated layering system — made up of polypropylene underwear, polar fleece micro-weight shirt and mid-weight sweater, topped off with a ripstop Gore-Tex shell — keeps out cold air and water better than double glazing.

At the same time, these elements work together, keeping perspiration away from the body. And the layers together are lighter and less restrictive than wearing a business suit.

In the skiing environment, fashion is the antithesis of function. Looking good now means looking hard-core, even if the fashion for expedition clothing has been taken to extremes, with firms such as The North Face and Berghaus arguing over whether one company's "drop down" design is better suited than the other's "pull away" system for using the outdoors as an alternative to French toilets.

Ski suits introduced last year by Armani are both elegant and hard-wearing, though this is not the case with many garments in the Ralph Lauren winter line. Bogner's one-piece suits are classics that will never fall apart or go out of fashion. Descente's all-red ladies' suit and men's stylish, black World Cup suit are made from water-repellent but breathable fabrics.

For expedition-inspired

Gore-Tex clothing guaranteed for life, look no further than Britain's Berghaus. The Berghaus Extrem range — Trango, Ushba and Manaslu — has been tested by the world's top mountaineers. Norway's Helly Hansen comes from an equally harsh environment.

Helly Hansen's Red Line Suit is probably the most technically advanced one-piece on the market, and is the choice of Mike Wiegele, owner of the world's largest helicopter skiing operation, for wilderness conditions. I am testing it, too, this season.

Sweden's Mover, along with the American firms Marmot and The North Face, are also among the elite manufacturers of adventure clothing designed to be worn in the layering system. All of these also make a full range of polar fleece shirts and sweaters. Columbia is an American firm which aims for high technical specifications at affordable prices.

BOOTS

Spend a morning in any top boot clinic in the Alps and you will discover that more than half of all boots sold in high street shops are one size too big, the rule of thumb being that if a boot feels roomy and comfortable upon initial fitting, it will prove sloppy on the slopes.

A precise fit does not contradict comfort. At first I was sceptical, but now I believe Raichle's Thermoflex inner boot is the best thing in ski-boot technology since the invention of plastics. This is an extraordinarily light, soft and thin bootie first warmed in an oven then shaped in seconds to your unique footprint.

Having skied all day in Canada in -30C, with toes

warm as toast, I can attest to its effectiveness.

I have never found a better performing, more comfortable shell than the new Raichle F-One. For race-proven performance, both the Lange X-Zero9 and the Technica Expedition and TWS models are also recommended. Salomon now has some of the most advanced boots on the slopes, including its innovative Pro-link range, and the more modestly priced Evolution models.

I owe my still-intact knee ligaments to Salomon's Spherix bindings, the first ski bindings to release in forward-twisting falls, the so-called "third axis of protection". Salomon's Propulse bindings use a spring-loaded cartridge that helps guide the ski into new turns.

Marker's new Logic bindings with a "biometric release system" set new standards for safety and performance, being able to sense the difference between the hard forces generated by skiing and those building to a fall.

Off-piste skiers now also have the luxury of lateral safety release, making the Swiss firm Fritsch's Diamir touring bindings the first to be used full-time on piste as well as on climbs.

The Raichle F-One from Snow & Rock, £299.95



Which skis would you choose? Nothing improves your skiing like new equipment, and now is definitely the best time to buy



Descente's red ladies' suit, £449 from Snow & Rock

STOCKISTS

A free catalogue from Snow & Rock (01932 569569) gives full technical descriptions and prices for all the hardware mentioned here, as well as for clothing by Bogner, Descente, Mover, The North Face and Columbia. Ellis Brigham (0161-834 5555) also offers a free catalogue. The two companies are on the Internet at <http://www.snowandrock.com> and <http://www.ellis-brigham.com>

For catalogues and information: Berghaus (0191-415 0200), Helly Hansen (0115 950 9508), Marmot (01539 625495), Bogner (0171-434 1994), Descente (0031 756 350081), Mover (0033 494 846179), The North Face (01629 580484), Columbia (01749 686868), K2 (0161-428 1178), Raichle (01734 471735), Lange (0181-998 4553), Technica (0181-991 9244), Salomon (01256 479555), Fritsch (01250 873863).

© The Daily Mail Ski and Snowboard Show, at London's Olympia, is on until November 9 from 10am-7pm at weekends, noon-5.30pm on weekdays. Admission: adults £9, children £4.50 weekends; adults £6, children £3, weekdays. Details and pre-booking: 0121-761 4433.

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SKI WEEKEND: AUSTRIA

I got an A for effort but an E for agility

Our ski correspondent Doug Sager survives his first day at a ski school – the Arlberg in St Anton

I am as nervous as a boy on his first day at school. Self-taught, and with "survival before style" my motto, it is my first day at a ski school. Not only have I been bundled off to the Eton of such establishments – the Arlberg in St Anton – but I have been promoted without examination into the top class. It is all the fault of Heinrich Wagner, director of the St Anton tourist office. Years ago, researching an article on ecology in the Alps, I asked earnest Herr Wagner to define the single most worrying environmental concern facing St Anton. "Swedish, vomit," he said and I wrote it down.

He was no doubt thinking of a petition St Anton residents had just presented him, huffing having lost patience with the hordes of teenage Scandinavians who flood each season into a resort where beer is ridiculously cheap compared to back home.

At the time I greatly admired Herr Wagner's sense of humour. He smilingly shrugged off the storm of criticism directed at him when my article was picked up by Sweden's leading newspaper.

Now, interposed by the tourist office into this off-piste elite class of early twenty-somethings, all red-hot experts, I sense that Herr Wagner is going to have the last laugh.

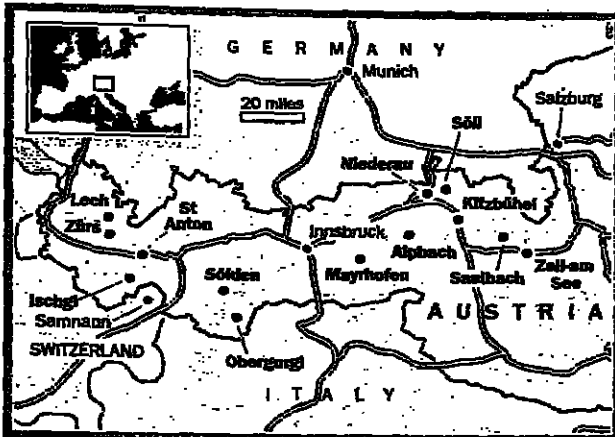
Robert Birkl is gruppenführer of the A-class at the Arlberg School. He leads us through dense fog far off piste and down deep, untracked powder. On piste, every traverse to the next lift is a flat-out race. Next come lessons in leaping from edge to edge while in a racing tuck. Where I finally fall down is skiing over bumps among avalanche barriers. School report: full marks for effort, but bottom of the class in agility.

Wherever I went in Austria last winter, I was impressed by two things: the superior accommodation and the loyalty of British skiers. Even in tiny villages such as Niederau, hotels have swimming pools, while big resorts elsewhere in the Alps often do not. Family pensions – such as the Waldheim in Mayrhofen – have bigger and better rooms than four-star hotels in France. The British who go to Austria are a lost cause: no matter how pressing my interview technique and praise for Canada or France, "We've been there, we like Austria" was the inevitable response.

Are there any reasons for not skiing in Austria, aside from the accordion music and pathological obsession with a peasant past? I put this question to an Austrian tourist director, assuring him of absolute anonymity. "Eighty-one million of them," he said, "all coming across our northern frontier."

PRIMARY SKIING

IT is frequently claimed that more Britons have learnt to ski in Austria than anywhere else.



Children under seven often ski free and there are good discounts for teenagers. In Mayrhofen, the world's first ski kindergarten was opened in 1954 by Rüdiger Spies-Mahring, now in her seventies but still out every day with children on the Aborn. I have never seen a wilder après-ski scene than at Mayrhofen's Ice Bar, where a DJ dressed as a polar bear abseils from the roof. The nearby Hinterux glacier has guaranteed year-round skiing, important for snowsure holidays in the low-lying Tyrol.

Not far away, on the edge of



Picturesque Saalbach

the Kitzbühler Alps, lies the lovely, unspoiled Wildschönau Valley, where Niederau is a firm favourite with beginners on a budget. A new skipass this season, Austria's answer to France's Trois Vallées, is the Kitzbühler Alpen regional consortium of 260 lifts and 680km of pistes. This pass covers all the Wildschönau resorts, the entire Söll Ski World, Kitzbühel and Alpbach – a paradise of well-groomed, easy slopes, some so flat that even timid neophytes will feel like Franz Klammer.

Söll has an undeserved reputation for low-life skiing. While it is true that the skiing is not at high altitude, and Söll's Whisky Mühle bar does a good chorus line in scantily clad girls (and boys), I found the town charming and the lift queues more civilised than in Switzerland. Women ski free on Wednesdays in Söll, and all nine resorts on the Söll Ski World pass are well suited to family skiing.

Families demanding a sure

snow record and not afraid of high prices cannot do better than Obergurgl. With one of the best ski schools in Austria and good hotels, Obergurgl is high enough (1,950m) to guarantee some of the best snow in Austria.

With 27 Austrian resorts, Inghams (0181-780 4444) features all those mentioned above. Thomson (0990 329329) has 12 Austrian resorts, and this winter offers free packed lunches at all of them. Neilson (0990 994444), with 12 resorts in Austria, offers unlimited beer and wine from 4pm to midnight in its Söll and Kitzbühel clubhouses. Airtoys (01706 232324) adds Mayrhofen and Obergurgl for this season, making a total of ten Austrian resorts.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

FOR A range of intermediate terrain, Ischgl is the answer. Skiing across the Swiss border into duty-free Samnaun is typical of the long, yet technically unchallenging itineraries Ischgl abounds in. Lively, not without Tyrolean character and with a decent snow record, Ischgl is rated by Austrians among the top three of their country's resorts. Kitzbühel is a good choice for middle-ground skiers, especially those who want a small city and a mix of clientele other than Teutonic. Despite the feared Streif downhill run, Kitzbühel's skiing is far from difficult. I think the medieval town is the most attractive in the Alps.

Sölden is nothing to look at, but the skiing in the Ötztal region serves intermediates well, not least in poor snow seasons when the nearby Rettenbach and Tiefsenbach glaciers guarantee access to high-altitude terrain. Après-ski beer feasts are popular and prices modest.

Intermediates looking for more challenge, who do not mind paying a bit more and waiting in lift queues, will find good scope in Saalbach-Hinterglemm. A pisted circuit of 200km demands only solid intermediate skills, although the demented Sound of Music ambience of Saalbach may require more endurance. Lake views and an attractive medieval town of some size make Zell am See a choice for intermediates who want pro-



Full of old money and deep snow: Lech is the only resort in the Alps to close itself off altogether when the pistes are estimated to be full

imity to glacier skiing and who are willing to attack some of the easiest black (expert) slopes in the Alps. The Europa skipass region between Zell and Kaprun is neither large nor high in altitude, but it offers some scenic tree runs down to the lake.

Crystal (0181-399 5144) has the widest choice of Austrian resorts (51) for all abilities and this season offers free chauffeured vans from home to airport for groups. First Choice (0990 557755) counts Kitzbühel and Saalbach among its 12 Austrian resorts.

POSTGRADUATE SKIING

ST ANTON is Austria's only world-class resort, the only one with hardcore skiing to rival Chamonix, Val d'Isère or Verbier. Although its skiing falls 300 or more metres below the heights of those resorts, in terms of the quality of snow, ruggedness of terrain and pure skiing pleasure, St Anton matches them all. To ski off the top of the Valluga, access to which is permitted only to skiers accompanied by a mountain guide, is to make one of the greatest runs in the world – down to Zürs – even if it is life-threatening for only a few metres.

There is a seriousness about skiing among the people of St Anton that you will not find in chic, sissy Courchevel or even among the hard mountain

men of Chamonix, who are more climbers and daredevils than ski technicians. For the World Skiing Championships in 2001, for example, St Anton is not messing about. The train station will be moved to make more room for skiing.

Lech, on the same Arlberg ski pass as St Anton, is the only resort in the Alps to close itself off altogether, barring the road, once the pistes are estimated to be full (they take a maximum of 14,000 skiers). Lech enjoys twice the snow of St Anton, and its satellite Zürs gets even more. Yet these resorts are dedicated to cosseting their clients, not shoving them out in the snow where the skiing is nothing special.

Lech's hotels are, though, Mention "chalets" and Lech's tourist director shudders. "Downmarket," he mutters. Lech's clients are old money, fairly aged and pampered by underground luggage delivery and moving sidewalks on the chairlifts, so they don't even have to shuffle their feet. Ski Equip (0161-440 0010) and Flexiski (0171-352 0044) have some luxury chalets in St Anton, essentially a hotel resort. Made to Measure (01243 533333) and Momentum Travel (0171-571 9111) are specialists for best hotels in Lech and St Anton. A guidebook, Winter in Austria, is available from the Austrian National Tourist Office (0171-629 0461).



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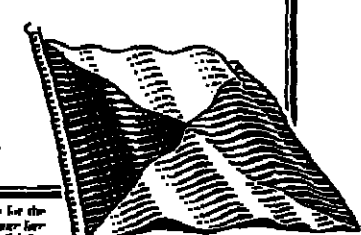
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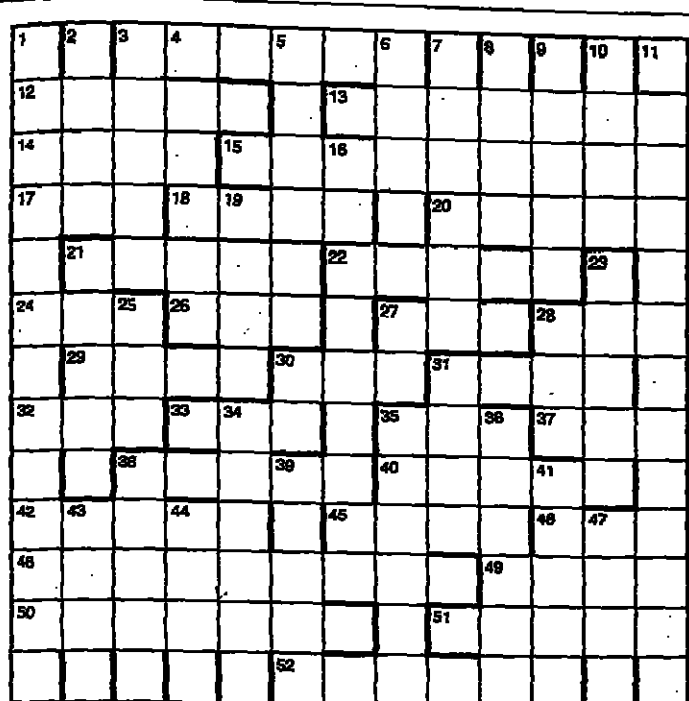
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No 3434: The Albigate Murder by Cheiron



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MOST clues have a definition of a word to be entered normally and subsidiary indications which imply an interpolated letter. These letters, in clue order, should help solvers to complete all but one of the other answers, in order. In the exception the hangman fails to make an appearance. Figuring out a location for the Albigate Murder will be aided by shading letters in some lights as indicated by an extra number in brackets, but after their clues. But where shading is indicated in one light it will not be indicated in an intersecting light. Another 18 squares (not so indicated) make 39 in all which must be shaded in the final diagram.

Chambers is recommended but for 20 across, a place name (in The Times Atlas).

ACROSS

- 3 Lightly touching saint's book first (6)
- 12 Digging up road behind house reveals ancient treasure (5)
- 13 Crocodile sighs with no hint of shamming by a valley lake (7)
- 14 In Peru, tin found in first circles (4)
- 15 Daisy's cousin Cynthia is half German, yes (9)
- 17 Excellent pork escalope starts with a vegetable (3)
- 18 Expensive trade off (4)
- 20 Somerset town twinned with an Israeli settlement (5)
- 21 Hypocritical pair has sacrificed integrity and candour primarily (9)
- 22 A period (year) of public disgrace (5)
- 24 Smiley cleared of edge of encroaching grass (3)
- 26 Secure woman in stable? (3)
- 27 Mill majestically turning out 50% reject goods (4)
- 28 Crazy rare tangle (3)
- 29 Local trains carry ten assorted light cases (8)
- 30 Falling trends in volume of trade leads to directors of wine negociants subsisting on pennies (10)
- 31 Generally commanded troops in prison hell (8)
- 32 Scottish back to work in this year to begin with (3)
- 33 Always cram in dear wages envelope (6)
- 35 Runner's second, New Zealander not finishing (3)
- 37 Wildest guarding a handbook (6)
- 38 Last of all he gets wet in river (5)
- 40 Paths lead to beaches on European borders (5)
- 42 The French mourn a month wasted in cell group (5)
- 45 Strong ale's initially exquisite sniff (4)

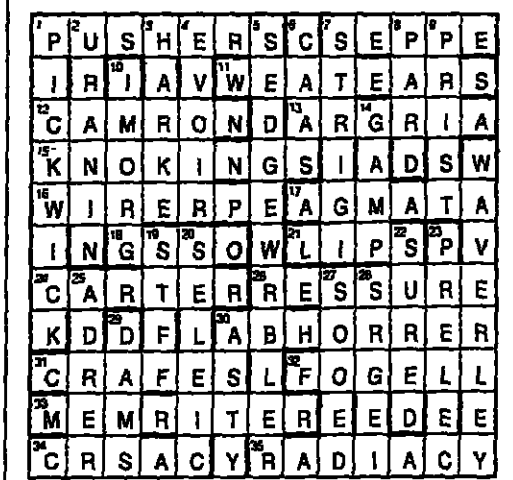
- 46 For example, Gilbert is mine (3)
- 48 Elected superintendent accepting bribe initially could be sitting duck (9) (4)
- 49 Garment is thrown round display (4)
- 50 Old left excluded from regionally organized factory (7)
- 51 Enclose in steep hill never-ending rich sources (5)
- 52 Stop Germany; provided French occupying east (6)

DOWN

- 1 Fruit in fool, half cherry and lime, in large vessel — not steamer (13)
- 2 Obsolete enemy fighter plane OK, not following (4)
- 3 Reluctant to include Ecstasy and amphetamine initially or pot (5) (2)
- 4 I deliver rest of coloured light controller (6) (4)
- 5 A mass assault on foot could make one — (6)
- 6 Talking the move (5) (1)
- 7 Urchin born in a V, African republic (6)
- 8 49 to one "Solo Song" (4)
- 9 Attractive woman's hot fling (5)
- 10 Snake found in India, wriggling, active not dead (4)
- 11 Compoteur of heavenly bodies I'll spot on page three initially Amazing! (13)
- 16 Chase of boat leads to slip and nasty mishap pitched in river (13)
- 19 Goddess's important dates (4)
- 21 Posh hasn't finished getting larger, not half! That sort of bear (5)
- 23 Dough's made from French extracted juices (5) (5)
- 25 Cram gorge with gallons (3)
- 27 Bags! Frightfully posh and personal (8)
- 28 Plant to escape through hole in hedge — no sun (3)
- 30 Irritable American was a candidate up state (5)
- 31 Pains of long standing go especially before start of surgery (4)
- 34 Official at dry club to ask for money (6)
- 35 Outline volumes of sack depleted to eat into reserves (11)
- 36 Choosing music for Thursday in chapel (10)
- 38 Gloomily threatening, cloudy centrally, becoming bright (5)
- 39 Caught Judge Kirkpatrick with daughter (5)
- 41 Intended, once united, introduces father (5)
- 43 Old gossip spread: sex appeal's coming back (4)
- 44 Control rake around boarder of lupins (4)
- 47 Please win (4)

Solution and notes for No 3431

Three Writers by Mr Lemon



Letters omitted from the Across clues spell THEY COME AS A BOON, and from the Down clues AND A BLESSING TO MEN. In addition, 5 clues each dropped the letters PEN. They were 1 across (PEN) PUSHERS, 21 across LIP/PENS, 24 across CAR/PEN/TER, 3 down PAR/PEN/D and 29 down DAM/PENS.

The full quotation in 4th Edition OED, being an advertisement for PENS:

They come as a boon and a blessing to men. The Pickwick, the Owl and the Waverley pen PICKWICK and WAVERLEY were omitted. Solvers should have highlighted the third 'Writer' OWL in the central squares.

The winner is Sylvie Vanston, of La Celle St. Cloud, France. The runners up are R.A. Maston of Wetherfield, Essex; Robert Bridge of London; Stewart Fowle of Edinburgh; S.J. O'Boyle of Horsham, West Sussex; P.S. Clough of Ashton-under-Lyme, Lancashire.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

IN GOULASH, undoubted contracts below Two Clubs are conceded. Each player sorts his hand into suits, and they are stacked together unshuffled. The cards are then dealt out several at a time. The fiercest method is to deal four and three threes on each round of the deal, rotating by one the player who receives four. Experienced Goulash players think the resulting distributions are too extreme — players sometimes get a complete suit — and prefer to deal two rounds of five each, and one of three. But there are a few lunatics who still play the 4-3-3-3 method, which produced the hand below.

Dir East Rubber bridge NS game

S —
H —
C —

SKOJ 1088 S —
785432 H A32
C — D8765432
C Q2

SA —
H —
DK —
CAKJ 109876543

W — N — E — S —
6S Pass 7H Pass 3D Dble 7NT All Pass

Contract: 7 NT doubled, by South
Lead: the king of spades

There were some dubious bids, and an extremely enterprising one, in this auction. First, it is wrong to open with a pre-empt on a nine high suit in a Goulash — East should have passed.

Second, what do you think of South's pass over Three Diamonds? It was the sort of manoeuvre favoured by the late Irving

Rose, but people eventually realised that when he passed at his first turn and subsequently bid Six Clubs he had a probable 12 tricks in his hand. I would have bid Five Clubs, with the idea of being pushed to Six Clubs. However, South was Howard Cohen, keeper of the Rose sacred flame, so naturally he followed his mentor.

West's Six Spades was unsound — it was highly likely he would be off two aces — but it hustled North into an indiscretion. Seven Hearts is doubtful — even if Six Spades was making, it looked from North's hand that he would lose three tricks in the red suits.

East's double of Seven Hearts set the scene for our hero's finest hour. The tremendous upside of bidding 7NT was that it might make, whereas Seven Hearts was bound to be going off. Of course it would have been unfortunate if West had a diamond and East a reasonable suit headed by the ace, but as West was marked with 12 spades there was a good chance he had no diamonds. Anyway, Rose would have bid 7NT.

Now round to West for the opening lead. When he led the king of spades declarer had 10 tricks — a spade, 11 clubs and four diamonds. The lead was poorly judged. West could tell South must have the ace of spades, and in addition a long club suit, so there was a great risk in letting him in to run his clubs.

East's double of Seven Hearts was likely to show the ace — if he had Qxx, that would give North a suit headed by the AJ, on which he would be less likely to bid over Six Spades. So I think a heart stands out.

Despite making 7NT doubled on this hand, Cohen still lost the rubber — a typical Rose outcome.

WORD ANSWERS

- PICARDY THIRD
(b) In Music, a raised or major tonic triad as the final chord in a work otherwise in the minor mode. First known use recorded circa 1500.
KRYPTON
(b) A rare gas discovered at University College London in 1898.
PHARPHAR
(a) "Are not Abanar and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings iv. 12).
GUNFIRE
(c) Gunfire is old Army slang for tea.

Answers from page 36

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

THE contribution to chess literature by grandmaster Harry Golombek, for three decades chess correspondent of *The Times*, cannot be underestimated. A particular hero of his was José Capablanca, the Cuban world champion, and he also admired the hypermodern ideas of Richard Reti. As one might expect, the highlight of Golombek's book on Reti is the clash between Reti and Capablanca himself. When he sat down to play this game Capablanca had gone undefeated for many years, and the way in which Reti defeated the virtually invincible world champion, with his delayed occupation of the centre and long-range bishop mobilisation, created a sensation at the time. Here is that famous game.

White: Richard Reti; Black: José Capablanca
New York 1924
Reti Opening

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6
3 b4 Bg7 4 Bb2 0-0
5 g3 b6

A good system of defence which has the two-fold purpose of limiting the action of White's queenside pawns and bringing the queen's bishop into play.

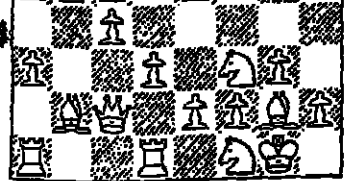
6 Bg2 Bb7 7 0-0 d6
8 d3 Nbd7 9 Nbd2 e5
10 Qc2 Re8 11 Rd1

A deep move directed against Black's projected ... e4.

11 ... a5 12 a3 h6

A waiting move of dubious validity since not only does it waste time, it also weakens the kingside.

13 Nh1 c5 14 b5 Nf8



The game has reached a critical phase in which both sides have to

make a definite choice as to their plan of campaign. Broadly speaking, the choice resolves itself into one between defence and aggression, and Capablanca now seems to prefer the former.

15 e3
White decides to break open the centre by e3 and d4, even though this may involve exposing his c-pawn to attack.

15 ... Qc7 16 d4 Bc4
17 Qc3 exd4 18 exd4 Nbd7

Here Golombek suggests as correct 18 ... Ne6 19 Qd3 20 Ne5 Qb7 21 c5 with the better game. However, Nunn continues 21 ... Bx2 22 Bx3 Nd4 23 Bxd4 cxd4 which he assesses as equal.

19 Qd2 cxd4 20 Bxd4 Qxc4
21 Bxg7 Kxg7 22 Qb2+

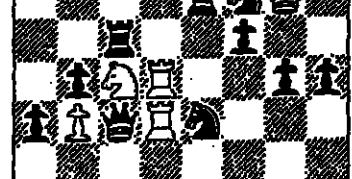
An important intermediary check that throws a bright light on Black's many weaknesses.

22 ... Kg8 23 Rd6 Qc5
24 Rad1 Re7 25 Ne3 Qh5

A powerful knight move that, by attacking the knight on f3, hopes to induce White to weaken his kingside by g4.

26 Nd4
This move is positionally fine and brilliantly combative. White could win the queen with 26 Rd5 Bxd5 27 g4 Bx3 28 gxf5 Bxh5 but the win (if, indeed, there is a win) would take a great deal of time.

26 ... Bxg2 27 Kxg2 Qa5
28 Nd4 Qc5 29 Ne5 Re7
30 Ne3 Ne5 31 Rd5



Black resigns
Black resigned, since the only way to save his queen is 31 ... Ne4, but this loses a rook after 32 Rxc5 Nxb2 33 Rc2 Na4 34 Nd5.

WINNING MOVE

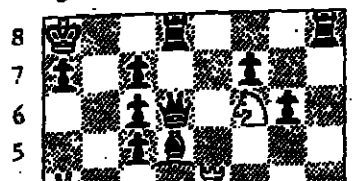
By Raymond Keene
Chess Correspondent

White to play. This position is from the game Akisuczy - Vark, Tallinn 1997.

Black's three pawns along the c-file create a barrier which prevent him from feeding pieces over to the defence of his king. How did White now exploit this?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. The answer will be published next Saturday.
Solution to last week's competition: 1 Nf7.

Last week's winner was: J.J. Murphy, Meadowvale, Dunganmon, Co. Tyrone.



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COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



The good news is that computer games can be good for you

"release stress and aggression in a non-destructive way".

He lists other positive side-effects, ranging from improved hand-eye co-ordination, attention span and motivation as well as a "sense of mastery, control and accomplishment". But what do you think? Do games make you feel more aggressive? Please write in

with your views to Computer Games and Pastimes, *The Times* Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, or send an e-mail addressed to the column at cyber@dircon.co.uk.

Now, a look at more of your entries for CyberSpace Thirty-Six, asking you to describe your favourite picture or photograph in 100

words, for a chance to win one of three Kodak DC25 digital cameras. Nicholas Jones, aged eight and one month, especially likes a photograph taken by a computer: "It is on a Parc Astérix water chute ride and we had just tipped over the edge of the steep part and were plunging at the speed of light," wrote Nicholas from Southgate, north London. "My dad had a worried expression and was gripping the side of the boat. I was in the front, the only one with my eyes open and leaning backwards."

Mr L. Hudson from Haywards Heath, West Sussex, recounted a remarkable tale behind his favourite photograph, which came to light only when he found an undeveloped 35mm black and white film cassette in his bureau. "One of the prints was of a newborn child, who I recognised as our grandson, held by an unknown, but delightful, female," he said. "My wife looked at it and told me it was our son, being held by her!" The film had been taken 26 years earlier, but "processed perfectly".

Six photographs, "in the style of David Hockney", make up the favourite picture of John Vincent from Langtree in Devon. It was taken in 1993, in Mutianyu, stand-

ing on a Ming Dynasty section of the Great Wall of China. He wrote: "Snaking its way along sharp ridges to high peaks and dropping precipitous slopes, the wall is blanketed in a fine morning haze and the last of the winter snow."

David Lister of Bath opted for an equally magnificent natural sight: "Newly arrived storm clouds erupt across the late autumn sky," he explained. "Turbid blacks and greys are washed with shafts of silver across half-seen peaks. The few remaining birds swoop and wheel excitedly across sombre cliffs of granite."

More entries to come, plus, of course, news of our winners.

TWO BRAINS

ANSWERS

Solutions to the questions on page 36

Question 1: ALPHA-27 and OMEGA-19 (G-O, E-J, L-Z, O-3 T-4, P-5, A-6, I-7, H-8, M-9).

Question 2: Dolphin, Sturgeon, trout, perch and wrasse are all fish.

NEW SOFTWARE



Virtually up in the air

CD-Rom for Windows and Mac from National Geographic, released here by Mindscape. Curious reporters learn about wildlife and the animals come alive either through short video sequences or photos and brief descriptions. The video snippets are from National Geographic Television's *Really Wild Animals* series.

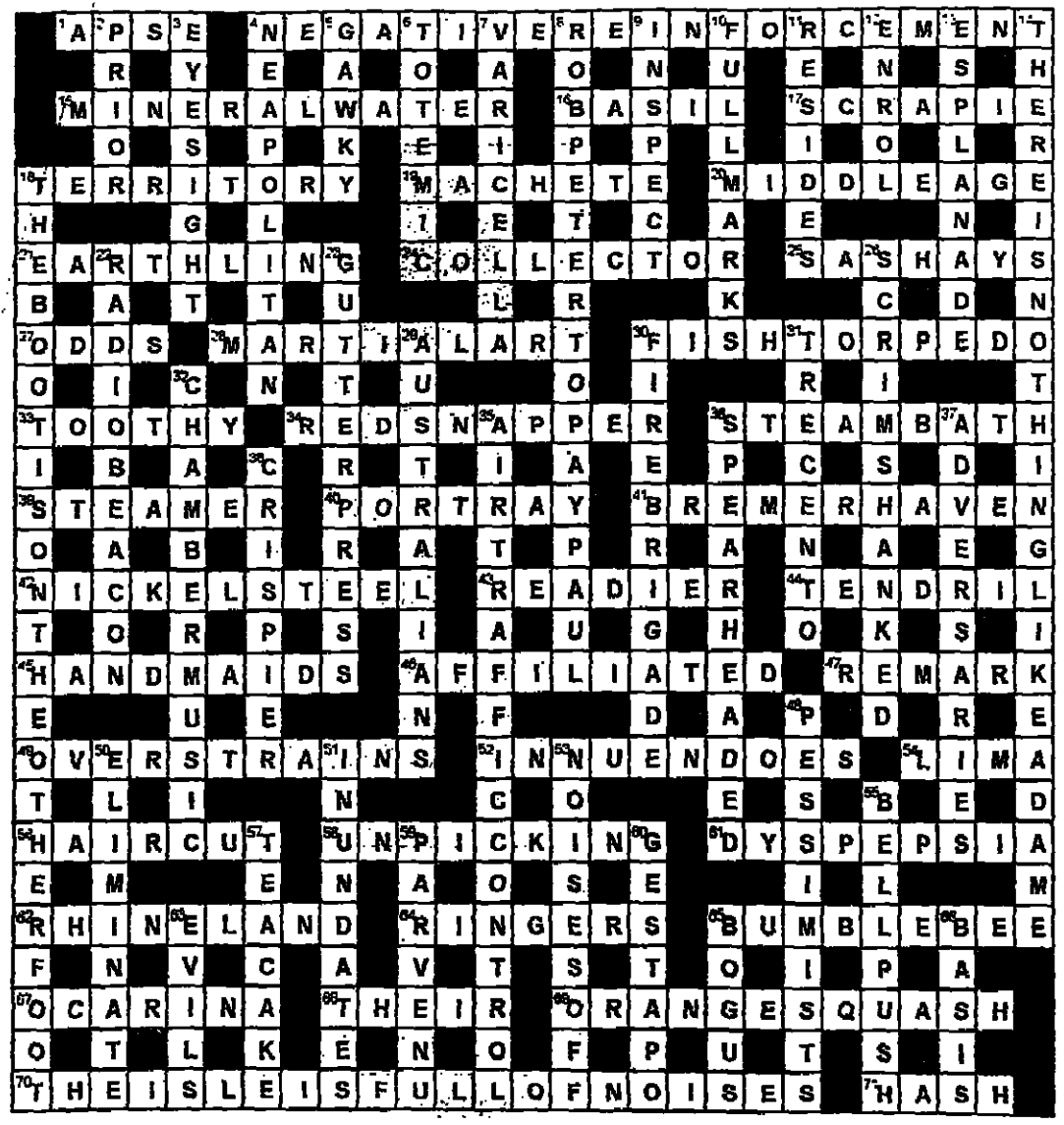
Gathered information, including all the photographs, can be printed out as postcards, letters and greetings cards, comic strips or complete newspapers. Those who complete a safari can also print out a satisfying certificate. Menus are uncluttered and navigation is a doddle. Swinging Safari connects to a Web site for additional activities. Verdict: 7 out of 10. Engrossing explore-and-print African safari adventure. £29.99.

METRO

POP QUIZ

The Pop Quiz in this week's Metro was duplicated from October 25. Entries will be received until November 4; answers will be printed on November 15.

SOLUTION TO JUMBO CROSSWORD 132



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD200, worth £105, is J.L. Dixon, of Chippenham in Wiltshire

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q What is appropriate when someone mispronounces a word? It seems insensitive — even bossy — to correct them, though sometimes they might be glad to be put right. Suppose it becomes necessary for you to repeat the word: do you repeat the mistake or pronounce it correctly?

— Antony Fletcher, Horsham, West Sussex

A You need a touch of Fred and Ginger here. It would obviously be very rude to correct somebody publicly, but it would be equally silly to reproduce their mispronunciation. It is much better to allow the mistake to pass apparently unnoticed, but should you need to repeat the word, intone it correctly but quite unemotionally. It is then up to the other person to decide whether or not he wants to adopt the accepted form. In my experience, people invariably do.

Q At office leaving parties the departing person is often presented with a wrapped gift. Some people unwrap them straight away, others acknowledge them and put them to one side. What would you do?

— Frank Johnson, Canterbury, Kent

A Office life is curiously tribal, and the leaving party is a rite of passage that commemorates a person's expatriation from that tribe. Therefore, key aspects should be communal experiences. This includes the unwrapping of the present, which needs to be done with considerable theatre on the part of the recipient, while being accompanied by appreciative "boos" and "aahs" from colleagues. In this way everyone feels that a chapter has been appropriately brought to a close.

Q We have about a dozen foreign friends who have been kind to us on holiday. Our problem is that they all turn up in London in June, our busiest month. Every single evening and lunch time is fully booked before their arrival. One year we invited several couples at once for dinner at home, and it wasn't a success. They want to meet interesting English people (preferably famous) not other foreigners. Each year it gets worse. What can we do?

— NDC, London W11

A How wonderful to be so popular. In such cases the answer is to follow the example of an international art dealer friend of mine, and instigate a big annual party to which you invite all your foreign visitors and your British friends. If done well, this sort of party will soon become a fixture on the social calendar. Start making the arrangements soon: you would be surprised how many people

plan their travel arrangements around such parties.

Q Is it bad form for a single man to ask to bring a friend to a wedding? I have been invited to a wedding next month and when I rang up to ask if I could bring someone, I got a very frosty response from the mother of the bride.

— Name and address withheld.

A Yes it is. Wedding givers who intend you to bring guests specify their wishes by writing: "Mr Simply Single and Guest" on the invitation. In these cases it is polite for Mr Single to specify his guest's name in his reply. If Mr Simply Single's name appears in splendid isolation, it is not only bad manners to turn up with a chum, but rather silly, too. In my experience, many new romances have begun at other people's weddings.

Q When writing to my widowed mother-in-law I address the envelope Mrs Jones. As her widowed daughter-in-law how should I be addressed? I maintain I am still Mrs David Jones. I would not be Mrs Mary Jones unless I had been divorced.

— Mary Jones, Rockbourne, Fordingbridge, Hants.

A You are absolutely correct. Although some women do choose to use their first names after being widowed, on the pretext that death has dissolved the union, the correct form is to continue being Mrs David Jones, as this confirms your status as a widow, rather than implying that you are divorced.

Q When one pauses during a meal, is it more appropriate to place one's knife and fork at an angle on the plate, or with the handles resting on the table?

— Alexandria McKendrick, Kirtlington, W Yorks.

A The correct procedure is to place your knife and fork across each other like swords, with the fork resting over the knife. This is tidier than your second option and indicates that you have not finished eating.

Q Following up on one of your answers of October 4, suppose John Smith is a knight? Then, presumably, "Sir John Smith" is correct on the envelope. I have never liked the "Sir J Smith" one sometimes sees. To open the letter, if he is a friend it is simply "Dear John". But what is correct if you and he do not know one another?

— PE Philpott, Dover, Kent

A Quite simply: "Dear Sir John".

John Morgan is associate editor of GQ

DAN BLAIR

PILOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

AT THE LAUNCH SITE, DAN AND PEABODY PREPARE FOR COUNTDOWN...

I KNOW, I KNOW!

OH DARLING, YOU'RE SUCH A HERO AND SO BRAVE TO BE UNDERTAKING THIS. SIGH

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

PICARDY THIRD

- a. A scraped 20° degree
b. The closing chord
c. A form of torture

KRYPTON

- a. Man-made fibre
b. A rare gas
c. An Orthodox church ornament

PHAREPHAR

- a. A Syrian river
b. An ancient lighthouse
c. Thrice winner of Melbourne Cup

GUNFIRE

- a. A red flowering shrub
b. A Haydn symphony
c. Early morning tea

Answers on page 35

TWO BRAINS

THE IQ test was originated by Alfred Binet (1857-1911) as an objective measure of comprehension, reasoning and judgment. Binet was motivated by a powerful enthusiasm for the emerging discipline of psychology and a desire to overcome the cultural and class prejudice of late 19th-century France in the assessment of children's academic potential.

Question 1:

Ten letters have been randomly allocated different values from 0 to 9. The sum of the letter values in GAMMA is 30, in ETA is 11, THETA 23, IOTA 20, PI 12 and PHI 20. What are the values of ALPHA and OMEGA?

Question 2:

Which of the following is the odd one out? Nolihip, Goneruts, Ourrt, Krash, Herpc, Swars.

R.K.

Answers on page 35.

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

For the past two Sunday mornings in Seattle I've tuned in to KPLU, the local public radio station, to hear Will Shortz, my opposite number on *The New York Times*, present his weekly programme. He challenges listeners with a variety of word puzzles, for example, can you think of an author, the six letters of whose name, repeated as often as necessary, can be arranged to form a well-known quotation of six words?

Fascinated by puzzles from early childhood, Will took advantage of Indiana University's Independent Learning Program to design his own course, and completed the world's only college degree in enigmatology, including a thesis on the history of American word puzzles. He directs the annual American Crossword Puzzle Tournament, which I attended last year. He also helps to organise the World Puzzle Championships, having recently returned from Croatia, where as non-playing captain he guided the American team into second place. The absence of British representation in this event is regrettable — with modest sponsorship, it would not be difficult to put together a team that could hold its own.

Will's collection of books and other artifacts constitutes a museum of games and puzzles, including an original copy of the December 1913 edition of *The*

New York World that featured the very first crossword, constructed by Arthur Wynne, an emigrant from Liverpool. Since then, crosswords have evolved into very different species on the two sides of the Atlantic. The clues in the *New York Times* puzzles, like those of most American crosswords, are mainly straight definitions. However, the cryptic puzzles familiar to British solvers are having an impact in the States, and there are many first-rate American exponents of the art — I like, in particular, *Harper's* and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Next week I will begin tutorials on the principles of clue construction.

PICTURE LINE

PETER MACDONALD



READERS are invited to suggest what Luciano Pavarotti or Sir Paul McCartney, pictured right, might be saying.

This picture, published recently, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, November 6.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Michael Birt, of Broadway in Worcestershire.

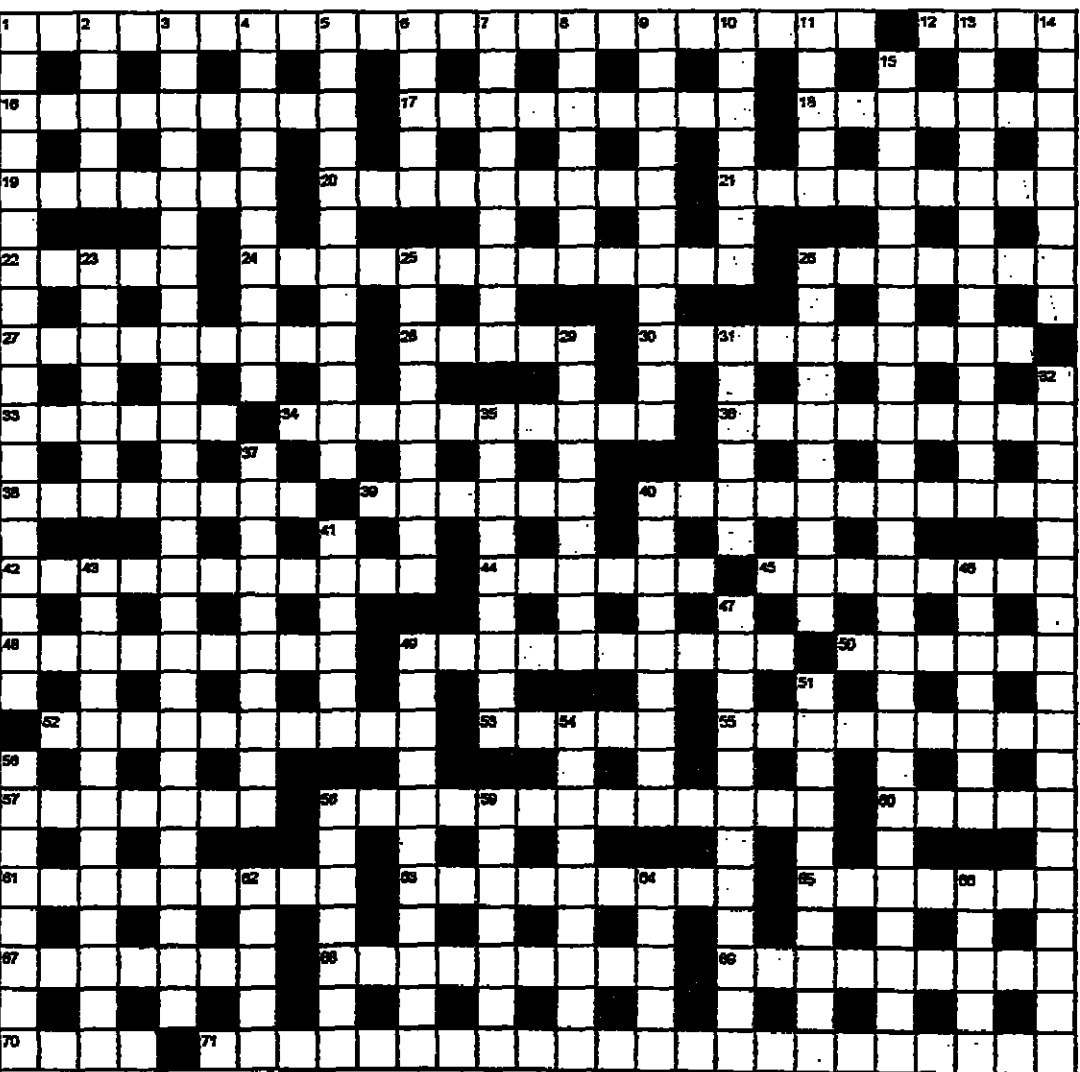


JUMBO CROSSWORD 134



ALFRED DUNHILL LONDON

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £105, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from silver-plated black resin, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to Jumbo Crossword 134, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Monday November 10. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, November 15.



NAME

ADDRESS

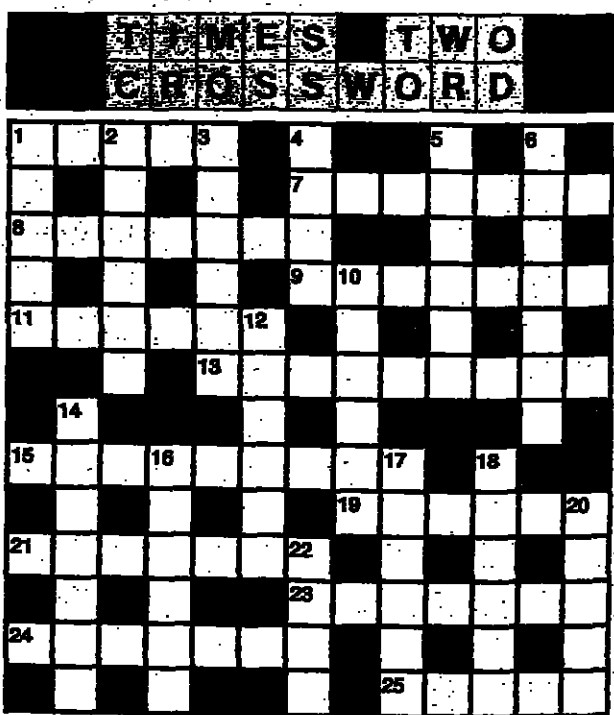
POSTCODE

ACROSS

- 1 Novel way to quote Gray in solitude (3,4,3,7,5)
- 12 Hungry hunter tucked into some sausages (4)
- 16 Trap enemy in order to get something given back (9)
- 17 Lays rich spread before son, a future monarch? (9)
- 18 One state very shortly joining another — briefly (7)
- 19 Produces confusion as the French put on clothes (7)
- 20 Fly, powerless, from New Delhi gang (4-5)
- 21 Popular star's high point as an original performer (9)
- 22 Opera not quite part of the standard repertoire (5)
- 24 One can give people a lift in a gondola (3-3,7)
- 26 Times taken by chap repeatedly, an islander (7)
- 27 Can a plum duff start to augment natural growth? (9)
- 28 Sue the newspapers (5)
- 30 Guidance for the identification of quartet playing (10)
- 33 Points to it twice for a stupid person (6)
- 34 Change round way to get over fence for dreadful horseman (10)
- 36 Healthy food for literary schoolboy — wayward Eric? (5,4)
- 38 Brilliant, yet left university without securing one's first (8)
- 39 Form a unit to become part of army (4,2)
- 40 Plant producing types of beer and wine (6-5)
- 42 Boys' gear mariner's taken to parts of deck (6-5)
- 44 Work succeeded, breaking writer's block (6)
- 45 Refuse half-heartedly at one assembly for scholars (8)
- 48 Directly demonstrating — even so, it's out of order (9)
- 49 Youngster begins list of books: cleric left out of chapter (5,5)
- 50 Remaining problem a streaker can manage without (6)
- 52 Unfortunate English farmer can produce sterile animal (10)
- 53 Old hat taken out (5)
- 55 Vehicle driven in parts of Guyana and another country (9)
- 57 Some personnel PM axed on retraining, for instance (7)
- 58 Young Silas has caught one captain needing certifying? (6,7)
- 60 Sharp and sweet? Not I (5)
- 61 Result of brims keeping back nothing? That's right (9)
- 63 Printer's measure to transfer worker, by the way (2,7)
- 65 Show-girl after the negatives? (7)
- 67 Circular eventually coming to the point? (7)
- 68 A lot goes wrong after piece broken off a panger (9)
- 69 Illiterate inquiry concerning author of fictional type? (9)
- 70 Even Israeli characters produce such wit (4)

DOWN

- 1 Predictable result of warning left on comets to reform (8,10)
- 2 One pawn trapped by rook and queen more likely to fall (5)
- 3 North American force Catholic politician initialled (5,8,7,6)
- 4 Pipe cheers a crackpot in quiet surroundings (10)
- 5 Grim-looking bantaxe confronted (7-5)
- 6 Prepared to keep dry wine (5)
- 7 Aircraft the Spanish major and I clear to go up (9)
- 8 Gradually introduce US version that's remaining popular? (7)
- 9 Classic work unusually long-lived, no volume to fade? (6,5)
- 10 Traditionally red, with shade of blue, apart from the top (7)
- 11 Made in mill, perhaps, with small furnace (5)
- 13 Displays humanoid in fair — respecting the rules, too (13)
- 14 Remove royal from seat on hunter running amok (8)
- 15 Advice to avoid complaints from non-priest I've upset more than priest (10,2,6,4,4)
- 23 Scott's rashly using part of programme, lamping (7)
- 25 Inoculative to incorporate Open University not carefully considered (9)
- 26 Group of islands in sea amended on computer (10)
- 29 French novelist and musician given the bird (9)
- 31 Fiddle or tuba to be played at various speeds (6)
- 32 Political positions found everywhere (4,5,3,6)
- 35 Sleep where fratricide resided? (4,2,3)
- 37 Uncertain judgement shown by visitor I beat in game (10)
- 40 Spectator near seats given to monarch (9)
- 41 Do this and you'll find a second part around (6)
- 43 Test, for example, showing socialist work unfinished (13)
- 46 It's usually a toxin, as opposed to dope (7)
- 47 Studying tug and it's part in staking ship (7-5)
- 49 Like top politicians, putting time into short TV production (11)
- 51 Be derisive about a band practising infatuation? (7,3)
- 54 Rush after paper offers cheap holiday accommodation (9)
- 56 Strike in county for extra protection for retired members (8)
- 58 Wonder how motorway run grabs new driver? (7)
- 59 Go out to bring in piano and look for remarkable performance (7)
- 62 Check around land's borders in part of Africa (5)
- 64 A strike over nothing — mission impossible to defend, finally (5)
- 66 Works of art I hadn't put up (5)



No 1240

ACROSS

- 1 Edgar —, impressionist painter (5)
- 7 A city: canonisation authority (7)
- 8 Break (law): treat with disrespect (7)
- 9 Redcemer (7)
- 11 Gets entrenched (4,2)
- 13 Two Russian empresses: three wives of Henry VIII (9)
- 15 Lover's card (9)
- 19 Southampton FC nickname (6)
- 21 Aesthetic genre (3,4)
- 23 Not yet arrested (2,5)
- 24 More frightening (7)
- 25 Wiping cloth (5)

DOWN

- 2 Conqueror of Goliath (5)
- 3 Astonpilot: Famous Five girl (6)
- 4 Motionless: radio crackle (6)
- 5 Charles —, US composer (4)
- 6 Sultan's chief minister (6)
- 7 A slander (7)
- 10 Capital of Greece (6)
- 12 Chat, gossip (6)
- 14 — White, Nobel Prize Lit. 1973 (7)
- 16 Hard work (6)
- 17 Baby in eyrie (6)
- 18 Sir — Agnewcheck (7, Night, 6)
- 20 Charin: name letters of (5)
- 22 Notice: stain (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1239

- ACROSS: 1 Headmaster 8 Bloomer 9 Llama 10 Glen
11 Migraine 13 Rascal 15 Scotch 17 Terrible 18 Hand
21 Exert 22 Trilogist 23 Nonchalant
DOWN: 2 Eve 3 Dame 4 Afraid 5 Tolerant 6 Realist
7 Name the day 8 Big Brother 12 Pakistan 14 Surgeon
16 Clutch 19 Accra 20 Hill

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS — SPECIAL OFFER

The Times Jumbo Crossword Book 3 is available to Times readers for just £4.99 (RRP £4.99) while supplies last from The Times Bookshop. Complete volumes of *The Times Two Crosswords* (Book 6 — £2.99), *The Times Crosswords* (Volumes 10, 11, 12, 13 — £1.99 each) and *Times Computer Crosswords* (all may also be ordered, with free delivery, along with any other books from The Times Bookshop).

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